

TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL KEBEDE, Esq.

**LD 580 - Ought to Pass**

**RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the  
Constitution of Maine Regarding Early Voting**

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

March 8, 2021

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, good morning. My name is Michael Kebede, and I am Policy Counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine, a statewide organization committed to advancing and preserving civil liberties guaranteed by the Maine and U.S. Constitutions. On behalf of our members, I urge you to support LD 580.

Voting is the cornerstone of democracy. Maine has a long history of protecting voting rights for all qualified people, and the ACLU of Maine works to preserve and strengthen those protections. We support efforts to make it easier for more qualified people to vote, and oppose measures that would prevent Mainers from participating fully and fairly in our elections.

This resolution would institute true early voting in Maine. If successful, this resolution would amend the state Constitution to allow the Legislature to authorize a process by which municipalities may conduct early voting by allowing voters to vote in the same manner as on election day during a period immediately preceding an election and to allow absentee voting for any sufficient reason. In our current system, what is referred to as “early voting” is actually “absentee voting.” This resolution would change that, and create a voting system that means what it says.

We are proud that Maine is a leader on voting rights, and urge this committee to protect that tradition. Please support this bill.