

Good Morning Chair Luchini & Chair Caiazzo and fellow committee members,

My name is Tammy O'Donnell, and I am the Town Clerk from the Town of Cumberland, Maine. I would like to testify in favor of LD580, RESOLUTION Proposing a Constitutional Amendment to the Constitution of Maine for Early Voting.

As a Town Clerk and Administrator of the Town of Cumberland's elections, I am intimately familiar with the election process and in particular the absentee voting process. As you are all aware, the absentee voting process played a huge roll in the November general election and continues to be a larger part of our elections. The absentee process is a very cumbersome and time-consuming process and early voting could be a very significant improvement in the election process for the State of Maine.

The absentee process involves, inserting ballots into envelopes, labeling the envelopes, mailing the envelopes, when the envelopes are returned, they need to be dated, timed, signed, applications matched and stapled to them, then stored until election day. They are then taken out, envelopes compared to reports, ballots emptied from envelopes, envelopes filed and stored for 22 months, and ballots processed through the machines. With early voting this process can be avoided and so much time can be saved. Early voting consists of voters coming to check in, requesting a ballot just like on election day, taking the ballot, voting their ballot, and inserting the ballot directly into the machine. No envelopes to date, sign, time stamp, open, or store. There will be procedures put in place by the Secretary of States Office just as there were when we did the PILOT program in November of 2009.

The Town of Cumberland was one of 9 municipalities that took part in the Early Voting PILOT program which was extremely successful in 2009. Below is a question from the 2009 survey of voters from the PILOT program. Over 12,000 people voted early in the PILOT program.

DESIRE TO HAVE EARLY VOTING AS AN OPTION IN FUTURE ELECTIONS

Voters were asked to indicate "Would you like to have this Early Voting option available in future elections?"

11,870 voters answered this question. An overwhelming 98% of voters (virtually 100% of those responding to this question) answered "YES," they would like this option in future elections.

Yes 11,798

No 82

No Response 180

Absentee voting will always be a part of our election process, however, adding early voting to our options will greatly improve the election process. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Tammy O'Donnell
Town Clerk
Town of Cumberland