

Town of Fort Fairfield

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March 5, 2021

As a Town Clerk and Warden for the Town of Fort Fairfield I am strongly opposed to LD 208.

Eliminate the three-day deadline for any voter to request an absentee ballot

By eliminating the three-day deadline for any voter to request an absentee ballot, you are putting an additional strain on Town and Election staff, who as an example, this past November Election, we saw record amounts of requests for and returns of absentee ballots. On a daily basis, the traffic of handling ballots and processing these ballots took my staff of (2) two, was an "all-day" affair. Being a staff of two while doing the daily work of a Town Office, we had people standing lines waiting to request, drop off or vote absentee ballots. Not only did it slow all of our procedures down, it frustrated customers and staff. When staff and customers get overwhelmed and impatient that is when mistakes happen. People will simply try to leave their ballots on the counter and leave. Therefore, the mistake of getting the applications signed and legally and properly document that a ballot was in fact voted in the presence of the Clerk. This dramatically affects our boasted Voter integrity. We as Maine Election Clerks can honestly boast about our voting process and how safe and secure it really is. Making this change is going to drastically reduce our ability to guarantee this in the future.

Allow a 3rd party runner to return a voter's absentee ballot by 8 p.m. on Election Day, rather than within 2 business days of issuance

Again, this is not a safe or guaranteed option for a voter to be confident that their ballot will be received in time and it should not be considered. Today's absentee voting procedures are set in place and they ensure that every voter has the chance to vote and have their ballot securely received and counted.

Allow in-person absentee voting on Election Day

Allowing for in person absentee voting simply cannot happen. At our particular Voting place, we utilize our Recreation Department gymnasium and have to close our Town office as we are again a staff of (2) two. We have to be at the polling location all day by Statute. We cannot continue to use the term absentee voting if we allow it to be done on Election day. This is just something that will slow Election day down and again cause confusion and mistakes. It would take another large Election like the one we just had in November where the lines were long and continuous. This puts a lot of strain on our election

clerks that are trying so hard to mark voters on the incoming voter list accurately. I can see a huge opening for a mistake of a voter to potentially vote twice if this is allowed.

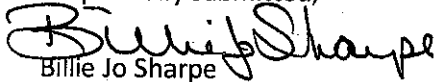
Example: John Doe could come in on election day, request an absentee ballot, vote, and then if that ballot has not had time to get processed through the Central Voter Registration system and then brought to the election clerk to check off of the incoming voter list, then there is nothing to stop that person from getting in line and being issued a ballot the proper way on Election day and voting again. Once again this can and will affect the integrity of our Election process in Maine.

I am honored to know that our current Election procedures work effectively and safely and DO NOT want to see the integrity of the State of Maine's Elections become compromised.

PLEASE CONSIDER NOT PASSING LD208.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Billie Jo Sharpe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "B".

Billie Jo Sharpe

Town Clerk, Fort Fairfield.