



Maine Town & City Clerks' Association

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Date: March 10, 2021

To: Senator Louis J. Luchini, Senate Chair
Representative Chris Caiazzo, House Chair
And members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

From: Patti Dubois, Chairperson, Legislative Policy Committee
Maine Town and City Clerks' Association

Re: LD 941 – An Act to Protect the Privacy of Absentee Voters

Position: OPPOSE

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association is Opposed to LD 941 for several reasons and we thank you for the opportunity to outline our points for your Committee.

Guidelines which are issued by the Secretary of State standardize the processing of absentee ballots and protect the voter's privacy. Election staff separate the voted ballot from the voter's return envelope and keep the ballot folded when it is placed in a bin with other voted, folded ballots. After a number of voted, folded ballots have been placed in the bin, the election official then unfolds the ballots and either feeds them into a tabulator or bundles them for hand-counting at the close of the polls.

Adding an additional sheet of paper in the mailed absentee ballots will add more postage cost to mailing the ballot to the voter and may add more postage for the voter to return the ballot to the municipal office, if mailed. In addition, there would be an additional cost to the municipalities to purchase the paper stock to be used to wrap the ballot. Even if instructions are provided to the voters, some may not use the privacy sleeve when returning their ballots by mail.

Clerks pointed out that the current return envelope is of sufficient thickness to conceal the voter's ballot choices, and that the absentee ballots are folded in such a way that the ballot choices are not facing toward the outside of the envelope anyway.

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association appreciates the opportunity to share its testimony with the Committee. Should any questions arise, please feel free to contact me at 680-4210 or by email: pdubois@waterville-me.gov.