Maine Online Voter Registration: Security, Efficiency, and Cost-Savings

Online voter registration (OVR) in Maine would let citizens with a current and valid Maine driver's license, state ID card, or a social security number apply to register to vote online. Forty states and the District of Columbia already have OVR, providing a secure electronic option for registration. With OVR, instead of filling out a paper form, the applicant enters their information into a secure website designed by the Secretary of State's office. The applicant's identity—based on their driver's license or state ID number or the last four digits of their social security number—is verified against agency records, and their encrypted information is submitted electronically to election officials. OVR replaces outmoded, expensive, insecure, and error-prone paper forms and makes the registration process more secure, efficient, and cost-effective.

Benefits of OVR

- **OVR is secure:** OVR makes the registration process much more secure. While federal law allows anyone to fill out a paper registration form, OVR would be limited to people with a Maine driver's license, a state ID card, or a social security number, each of which establishes identity.
    - *Applicants would have to provide their unique driver's license/ID card number or the last four digits of their social security number to use the system. This information would be verified against Bureau of Motor Vehicle and Social Security Administration records before an application is accepted.*

- **OVR uses modern, encrypted technology:** OVR provides additional security benefits over paper forms. While paper forms can be lost, stolen, or damaged, OVR creates an encrypted electronic record of each registration. These OVR data logs highlight unusual activity and potential fraud, making it easier for investigators to follow up on questionable submissions. This type of investigation and follow-up is impossible with paper forms.

- **OVR is accurate:** OVR is more accurate than paper forms. Paper forms can contain clerical errors, typos, and missing information. By contrast, online applications are legible and complete, preventing partially filled out or unreadable forms from being submitted. OVR ensures that correct information ends up on the voter rolls, significantly increasing the accuracy and reliability of registration records.

- **OVR is efficient:** OVR makes voter registration much more efficient. A completed and verified online application is securely and electronically forwarded to election officials for processing. To add the voter to the rolls, the town clerk does not need to re-enter any information. By contrast, the information on each paper form must be manually typed in by hand by town clerk staff, wasting time and raising the risk of additional data entry errors.

- **OVR saves money:** OVR is also significantly cheaper than paper forms, since it eliminates the need for town clerks to re-enter information or follow-up with questions about illegible or missing information.
    - *An online registration costs roughly $0.03 to process, while each paper form costs an average of $4.72 in labor. Because voters submit hundreds of thousands of paper forms each year, OVR could save Maine more than $900,000 each election cycle through reduced paper forms.*

OVR is *Bipartisan*:

- "In a purple county with nearly 45,000 voters, more than 1,000 Mason County voters used our online portal before the 2020 election to register or update their voter information. With online voter registration, my staff does not have to try to decipher a voter's penmanship to figure out whether a letter is an O or an A, or a number a 1 or a 7. For the registrant, it provides the assurance that we will get their information instantaneously, not relying on the mail or a volunteer to deliver it to us on time." **-Paddy McGuire (D), County Auditor in Mason County, Washington**

- "States with online voter registration have saved money, gained efficiency, and improved the accuracy of their voter registration data. Voters experience a more secure system that helps to prevent fraud. Personal information is given directly to the elections agency rather than handing it over to a stranger on the street." **-Paul DeGregorio (R), former Chairman of the US Elections Assistance Commission (2006), former Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the International Foundation for Election Systems (1993-2003), and former Director of Elections in St. Louis County, MO., (1985-1993)**

- "Most people think online voter registration is about registering new voters, but its biggest benefit is updating existing voter files. Since Colorado rolled out OVR in 2010, our counties have updated 2.6 million records using OVR data. Just think of the human-hours Colorado saved by receiving data electronically instead of hand-entering data. Also, thousands of Coloradans have logged into their voter file and canceled their registration when they moved out-of-state, thereby reducing the number of inactive voters awaiting NVRA cancelation." **-Judd Choate (D), Director of Elections, Colorado**

- "I am a town clerk for a small town in Rhode Island. Online voter registration has meant a big reduction in processing of paper forms, an increase in convenience for the voters, and more accurate data in our voter registration database. Voter registration used to be an all-paper process with clerk staff deciphering handwriting. Human error has been reduced with online voter registration." **-Carol Wordell (R), Town Clerk, Little Compton, Rhode Island**

- "Online voter registration is a valuable tool in strengthening our democracy and simplifying the process of our residents. Using pre-verified information such as a social security number or driver's license number, citizens can easily register from anywhere." **-Taylor D. White (I), Town Clerk, Sandwich, Massachusetts**

Robert Booth
Portland

Members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to write you today. My name is Robert Booth and I live in Portland.

I am the National Field Director for RepresentUs, a non-profit that brings together conservatives, progressives, and everyone in between to dismantle the root causes of inequities in our democracy, and a member of Mainers for Modern Elections.

I'm writing in support of LD 1126, a bill that would bring online voter registration to Maine. Online voter registration will make registering to vote more accessible for all Mainers and will optimize registration processing for clerk's offices.

I am attaching a list of benefits this policy would provide to the state of Maine -- benefits that range from improving accuracy, efficiency, security of our elections, as well as cost savings.

Online Voter Registration exists in 40 other states and it is time to modernize Maine elections. Please vote Yes for LD 1126.