

Testimony

Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

April 5, 2021

Re: L.D. 1126 Act to Update the Voter Registration Process

I am writing to oppose LD 1126 which calls for introducing a system to register online to vote. Registering online has not proven to be safe nor secure. It presents a multitude of security and privacy risks and disadvantages members of our population.

LD 1126 legislation states that it will implement a “system for third party organizations to collect and to submit electronic voter registration applications to the Secretary of State.”

Most recently a cyberattack “targeted Accellion, a third-party vendor that is used to securely transfer files” at UC Berkeley. Accellion, though a twenty-year-old cyber security company, was vulnerable to hacker attacks. This recent attack “affected about 300 organizations, including universities, government institutions and private companies.” Such attacks, it is reported, have been plaguing government agencies, businesses, and individuals. For example, Washington State Auditor’s Office reported last month that information on nearly 1.5 million unemployment applicants had been stolen.

In 2019, hackers accessed Virginia’s state database and “deleted patients” pharmaceutical and prescription information. Let us not forget, too, that even the Pentagon was compromised.

In spite of sophisticated systems claiming to secure private information, hackers are still able to infect networks undetected and steal personal data.

Registering online, too, presents privacy concerns for survivors of “domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and trafficking” victims who do not want their personal information to become public. The release of this information is directly related to the safety of these citizens.

Voter records include our personal information such as our name, address, driver’s license number and/or the last four digits of our social security number and party affiliation. This private information can be released to “law enforcement, government officials and agencies, businesses, journalists, and to the general public.”

In addition, voter records are often collected from public records and then sold and used for marketing purposes making us all vulnerable.

The proposed legislation actually disadvantages many people, especially those living in rural areas without broadband access, and seniors who may not know how to navigate the internet and who may not even own a computer. Registering online may also render it difficult for people with certain disabilities. People with disabilities would thus have to seek assistance to register online.

Registering online to vote can go against the grain of both democracy and privacy. There is no way to ensure that the person registering online has not been “coerced.” And there is no method by which to prove the actual identity of the person registering to vote or to ascertain if that person is a US citizen.

Registering online may seem like a cure for all but it does not ensure democracy nor privacy. There will also be expenses to consider to implement such a system and Maine citizens cannot incur additional expenses/taxes.

Registering online will have consequences and we cannot risk the safety of our citizens' nor disadvantage others.

Thank you,

Annie Christy, Cape Elizabeth

Resources:

<https://www.techsafety.org/voter-registration-privacy>

<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/uc-berkeley-data-breach-leaves-80000-students-staff-vendors-vulnerable/2015226/>

<https://www.crn.com/news/security/217400303/uc-berkeley-database-hacked-160000-records-compromised.htm>

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