

April 5, 2021

Good morning Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Japhet Els and I am the Outreach Director for AARP in Maine, representing more than 200,000 members 50+ statewide. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan member organization representing the interests of 50+ Mainers and their families.

AARP Maine supports LD 1126, An Act To Update the Voter Registration Process.

The right to vote, along with full and fair representation, is the most fundamental of all democratic rights, and AARP has long advocated for fair and simple election procedures that facilitate the high level of participation of voters aged 50 and older. We believe voting systems and registration procedures should be designed to encourage maximum participation in the electoral process.

AARP also believes voter participation in the electoral process should be encouraged and made simple for all citizens wishing to participate in the democratic process. Changing or updating a voter registration online, managing party affiliation, and conforming an online option to current law are all goals AARP supports with LD 1126.

COVID-19 has forced much of our daily lives online no matter our ages. Older Mainers continue to adapt and connect to their communities online – including around elections. More and more older Mainers are participating in the electoral process remotely. More than half of all Maine voters did so by mail last November and this trend will likely continue as more voters become familiar with the flexibility of absentee voting.

Whether facing a pandemic, a mobility challenge, or a scheduling hurdle, adding an online option for Mainers to manage their voter registration status and affiliation is an easy option giving voters more ways to access the same trusted system in a modern and efficient manner. LD 1126 will allow all voters, not just older ones, a safe, secure, and simple option to manage their voter registration record without ever leaving their home.

On behalf of AARP Maine, we urge your support of LD 1126 for its impacts on older voters, both of today and tomorrow. We are happy to answer any questions or provide additional information.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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