



**Testimony In Support
LD 1126: An Act to Update the Voter Registration Process**

April 5, 2021

Good morning Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, I am Alysia Melnick and I am here to represent the Center for Secure and Modern Elections, an organization dedicated to advancing non-partisan, pro-voter policies at the state level that modernize the voting process and ensure that every eligible American citizen can have their voice heard through policies and reforms that create an election process that is efficient, accurate and secure.

I testify today in support of LD 1126, An Act to Update the Voter Registration Process and the friendly amendments offered by the sponsor and Secretary of State. While Maine has already established itself as a national leader in civic participation, we have learned over the course of the pandemic that more can be done to ensure that we have the most secure, efficient, and accessible election system in the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to election administration last year, one of the most burdensome for election administrators and anxiety producing for voters being the mail time delays that impacted receipt and processing of voter registration forms and absentee ballot requests. Near registration deadlines, clerks were inundated with voter registration forms and worked tirelessly to manually process registrations to ensure every eligible Mainer that wanted to vote, could do so. Online Voter Registration offers an opportunity to streamline the registration process for both voters by allowing voters to fill out a voter registration form online, from the convenience and safety of their own homes.

OVR will make the registration process more efficient and streamlined for voters and for clerks and elections administrators as well. The online form protects against incomplete and incorrect forms being submitted, by immediately notifying voters if they have made a mistake and allowing correction. This ensures that clerks are only receiving complete and correct forms, reducing the need for clerks to chase down voters to remedy a form mistake or obtain and add missing information. Additionally, because OVR eliminates the need for handwriting information, the data from the online form is much cleaner and thus easier to match and verify. Additionally, OVR automatically redacts sensitive information like Social Security Numbers

immediately after submission, taking away additional steps like shredding or manual redaction on a paper form, and enhancing the security of voters' data.

The state of Maine also benefits from OVR. OVR will allow Maine to forgo the cost of printing, scanning, and processing hundreds of thousands of voter registration forms each year. The cost of implementing an OVR system would fall just under \$100K, and in the long run, this will be far outweighed by the money saved. OVR also provides a built-in mechanism for voter rolls to stay as up to date as possible, as voters can input address changes and other updates into the online form.

Implementing OVR is a surefire way to increase accessibility to democracy, increase the security and efficiency of Maine's elections system, and even save the state money along the way. I urge you to support this bill and am happy to answer any questions the committee has.