

Sumner Richards IV
S. Fernald's Country Store, Damariscotta

Senator Luchinni , Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Sumner Fernald Richards IV. I'm a second-generation small business owner, and I live in New Harbor.

I'm here today to testify in favor of LD 1126, An Act To Update the Voter Registration Process.

Hi, I own and operate S. Fernald's Country Store in Damariscotta. We're a hub of the community, a Main Street business where everyone comes to see their neighbors and get a bite to eat.

Like running a democracy, running a business requires a lot of paperwork. When my parents founded Fernald's over 30 years ago, they kept paper records. Over time they, like virtually every small business owner, transitioned over to keeping records on their computer, something that my wife Rosie and I continued when we took over Fernald's five years ago. It's more accurate, more secure, more convenient and more accessible. We can access our records at the store or even from our phones when we're waiting in a long line to update our voter registration.

Similarly, when my parents opened Fernald's, the only way that customers would find out about us was through word of mouth or if they happened to walk by. Now we have a website where customers can see our menu and active social media following on Facebook and Instagram. The Internet has allowed small businesses like mine to reach people who would otherwise never known we existed.

No one is arguing that businesses should only keep paper records, but that's the argument against online voter registration. Why insist on an arcane system that is less accessible, less efficient, less accurate, and less secure?

Democracy is like a Main Street business; it thrives when everyone is able to access it, when everyone is able to participate.

Please vote yes on LD 1126, An Act To Update the Voter Registration Process.
Thank you for your time.