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Senator Luchini, 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 Abigail Theobald and I live in Lyman, Maine.

I am here today to support LD 1126, An Act to Update the Voter Registration Process because the pandemic has slowed the mailing times of voter registration drastically in-state and out-of-state. Therefore, making it harder for college students to register to vote.

As a college student in the state of New Hampshire, the out-of-state mailing of a voter registration application from Maine can take far more than two weeks to be delivered.

I became invested in this problem when I began working as a fellow with the Campus Election Engagement Project, as my goal this past semester was to help students from my college register to vote.

There is a large population of students from the state of Maine that attend the same institution as myself and were not yet registered.

Most of these students did not have cars on campus, therefore making it hard for them to get back to Maine to register to vote in-person and with mailing times being extended due to the pandemic, there were few options for these individuals.

While this is the reality of the current system, we can find positive solutions to rectify the problem at hand.

Passing this bill will prevent future Mainers attending school in other states from facing the challenge of registering to vote in time for an election when mailing times are slow and traveling home is not an option.

Additionally, the state will benefit as well because the implementation of OVR allows for the cost of printing, scanning, and processing voter registration forms to be forgone. The verification process becomes fast and secure since voter registration records can be linked to driver's licenses or state ID records, as well as SSN's.

Because online voter registration would reduce barriers that traditionally prevent Mainers attending school in other states from registering to vote, students such as myself will feel more inclined to participate in our nation's democratic processes.

With in and out-of-state mailing times being traditionally slow and even slower now due to the COVID-19 pandemic, college students would benefit greatly from an OVR system, as it would make the process of registering to vote more realistic and convenient.

While I highlighted that the pandemic has created additional barriers for voter registration, OVR will have a lasting positive affect that extends beyond pandemic times. For this reason, I am asking you to please vote yes on LD 1126.

Thank you very much for your time and I am happy to answer any questions that you may have!