



Solutions for a  
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Director of Advocacy, Defend Our Health  
In Support of LD 1126, "An Act To Update the Voter Registration Process"  
Before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee  
April 5, 2021

Good morning, Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee: My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the director of advocacy for Defend Our Health, formerly known as the Environmental Health Strategy Center. Defend Our Health's mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes and products that are toxic-free and climate friendly. I am here to testify in support of LD 1126, "An Act To Update the Voter Registration Process". This bill would create an online voter registration process for eligible voters in Maine.

The pandemic has shown us that we need to have systems in place that can be accessed without leaving your home. Mailing times were significantly slower during 2020, sometimes nearing two weeks for in-state deliveries. This hampered the ability for individuals to register to vote. Additionally, community organizations were unable to do outreach in-person to encourage registration. We need an online system that is easily accessed by everyone.

Additionally, setting up an online voter registration system will help the already cash-strapped state save money in the long run. While there is an initial investment, that small cost will be made up easily over time. OVR allows the state to forgo the cost of printing, scanning, and processing hundreds of thousands of voter registration forms each year, a process which can cause costs to quickly add up.

Maine is falling behind the curve when it comes to making it easy to register. 40 states have already created online voter registration systems. Online voter registration is a decades-proven modernization that streamlines the process to make registration as simple and effective as possible. It's time for Maine to join these states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, by shifting to an online voter registration system.

On a personal note, in my previous life, before moving back to Maine, I helped register voters and run elections as a county employee in Clackamas County, Oregon. Watching voters of all demographics come into the county elections office to register and to vote never got old. Young and old alike were always so excited to register and to turn in their ballot. Everyone should be able to feel the excitement that comes from making your voice heard. I believe we should be making it easier, not harder for people to vote. Part of that is making it easier for people to register. This bill will do just that. Democracy flourishes when more people are engaged in the process. Maine must do more to make sure that every voice is heard.



Therefore, Defend Our Health urges the committee to unanimously vote “ought to pass” on LD 1126.

Thank you for your time.