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Senate Chair Louis Luchini  
House Chair Chris Caiazza  
and honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee...

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to introduce my bill.

I have complete confidence this committee will unanimously report out a superior bill which will be enthusiastically endorsed by the chief executive so I will be brief.

My name is Chris Johansen and I represent House District 145 which is the 18 organized towns between Bridgewater and Sherman in Aroostook County. My bill, LD 557, would require some form of photo ID to prove a voter is a resident of the State of Maine and a United States citizen entitled to vote here. I'm not going to go into the open borders problem to our south or those with Canadian plates voting at our northern border communities. LD 557 is an attempt to stop voter fraud in our state elections. I'm not claiming we have a voter fraud problem in this state. I am saying we do not know because there is no method to check at the polling location. ANY fraudulent vote dilutes my vote and every other vote cast by the citizens of this state. The appearance of voter fraud-free elections are the goal and while I'm waiting to vote, I want to be assured that those voting with me are qualified voters.

Having a voter ID law is no inconvenience to the vast majority of voters who already possess this ID. We have asked some of our citizens and some non citizens to give a lot more to guarantee a free and fair election. We require all citizens to appear for jury duty. Anyone making the claim that certain classes of folks would be put in an undo hardship to get a photo voter ID is, I believe, a racist statement.

This country's sad history of voter fraud on steroids was committed against minorities. Ensuring one citizen, one vote is the surest way to protect the voting rights of ALL Americans and that is the intent of this bill.

Thank you very much for your time and attention and I would be happy to answer any questions.