



January 27, 2025

Re: LD 13

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and the distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

Mainers For Modern Elections would like to share our support for LD 13.

Mainers for Modern Elections is a non-partisan coalition of advocacy groups that believes a functioning democracy requires easy access to the ballot for eligible voters, especially from marginalized voting populations; strong voter protections; and confidence in a secure, modern, representative, and well-resourced elections system. The coalition advocates for statutorily protected voting rights, structural democracy reforms that expand voter access, and investment in and modernization of election administration and implementation. We pursue these policies through direct and grassroots advocacy and by educating and providing resources to public officials and coalition members.

LD 13 addresses an ongoing challenge that jeopardizes Maine's Election Division's ability to complete vital tasks. Printing ballots and election materials is a foundational component to Maine's election process. The Office of the Secretary of State requires reliable funding to ensure a smooth completion of this basic and essential step. This bill establishes a consistent fund for the cost of election materials allowing the Office of the Secretary of State to focus their efforts on other points of the election process.

A particularly long ballot or a higher-than-expected turnout of citizens casting ballots will increase election costs, leaving the Office of the Secretary of State to make up these ballot expenses from other funds. Requiring the Office of the Secretary of State to make cuts in other approved budget areas to cover these costs continually short-changes the needs of the Elections Division.

Mainers for Modern Election supports a formal working group to study school polling places. Schools are often centrally located in communities, close to where voters live, making them ideal polling places. However, we understand the impact of school closure and the hardship this imposes on teachers and parents. Polling places are pillars of our community and deserve the deep attention that a working group can bring to bear.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Members of the Mainers for Modern Elections Coalition include:

ACLU of Maine

AARP of Maine

Center for Secure and Modern Elections

Common Cause

Defend Our Health

Gateway Community Services

League of Women Voters of Maine

Maine AFL-CIO

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections

Maine Conservation Voters

Maine Education Association

Maine Equal Justice

Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition

Maine People's Alliance

Maine SEA, SEIU Local 1989

Maine Women's Lobby

Maine Youth Power

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England

Represent Us