



TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL KEBEDE, ESQ.

LD 349 – Ought Not to Pass

**An Act to Repeal the Laws That Allow Same-day
Voter Registration**

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

February 10, 2025

PO Box 7860
Portland, ME 04112

(207) 774-5444
ACLUMaine.org
@ACLUMaine

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, greetings. My name is Michael Kebede, and I am Policy Director at the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine, a statewide organization committed to advancing and preserving civil liberties guaranteed by the Maine and U.S. Constitutions. On behalf of our members, I urge you to reject LD 349.

The ACLU of Maine is committed to protecting and expanding voting rights. Our democracy is stronger when as many people as possible have a voice. That is why we consistently urge you to consider ways to strengthen and expand, rather than constrict, participation in the voting process.

Same day voter registration is good public policy and there is no reason to repeal it. Maine law has permitted same day voter registration since 1973, when it passed with bipartisan support in a Republican-controlled legislature. It has worked well for over fifty years, particularly for people who have moved recently, are busy, have multiple jobs, and benefit from the convenience of registration and voting in a streamlined fashion.¹

¹ *History of "Same-Day" Voter Registration in Maine*, Bangor Daily News (Nov. 5, 2011), <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2011/11/05/news/history-of-same->

Not only has the legislature rejected similar legislation, but so have the voters. In a 2011 “people’s veto,” which passed with 60% of the statewide vote and garnered majorities in every county, Mainers roundly rejected an effort to eliminate same day voter registration.²

LD 349 also significantly relaxes the rules around challenging voter registration and wardens’ ability to keep polling places running smoothly. This proposal would disrupt elections in Maine in three ways. First, it repeals the provision that requires those who want to monitor voter registration at the polling place tell the clerk ahead of time in writing. In practice this usually means that a person inform the clerk the day before, which seems very reasonable. Second, this proposal repeals the instruction that says a person who is monitoring voter registration in the polling place cannot handle voter registration cards, handle the registrar’s files, or handle the clerk’s files. Allowing election monitors to handle other voters’ registration cards or the clerk’s files would dramatically decrease the security of the Election Day process. And third, the proposal repeals the law that says a warden may request fewer polling place registration monitors if the work of the registrar or clerk appears to be inhibited.

Maine has effective election laws that promote secure elections characterized by integrity and high voter turnout. I urge this committee to protect and expand Maine’s election laws, rather than repeal voting laws that work well.

Please reject this harmful bill.

[day-voter-registration-in-maine/](https://www.aclu.org/news/voting-rights/maine-votes-no-voter-suppression); *Maine Votes “No” to Voter Suppression*, ACLU of Maine (Nov. 9, 2011), <https://www.aclu.org/news/voting-rights/maine-votes-no-voter-suppression>

² Me. Sec. of State, Bureau of Corp., Elections & Comm’n, Tabulation for Referendum Election, County and State Totals, held Nov. 8, 2011, <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/results/2010-11/results10-11.html#spec11> (last visited Feb. 7, 2025).