



Maine Education Association

*Jesse Hargrove President
Beth French Vice President
Jaye Rich Treasurer
Rebecca Cole NEA Director
Rachelle Bristol Executive Director*

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

My name is Jan Kosinski, and I am here on behalf of the Maine Education Association to testify in opposition to LD 349, *An Act to Repeal the Laws That Allow Same-day Voter Registration*. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators, including teachers and other educators in nearly every public school in the state, as well as full-time faculty and other professional and support staff in both the University of Maine and Community College systems. Thousands of retired educators continue their connection and advocacy work through the MEA-Retired program.

The MEA has consistently voiced our concerns about any infringement or impediment on the right to vote for any eligible citizen. We believe deeply in democracy. In fact, every day, teachers across the state teach the next generation of voters about the importance of voting and the need for citizens to engage in the electoral process. We know our state and our country work best when voters actively participate and engage in our electoral process.

Our opposition to LD 349 is only compounded by the voter initiative passed in 2011. Question One on the November 2011 ballot was about the exact topic before you today – repealing Maine’s same-day voter registration law and requiring voters to register at least two business days before the Election. It is important to note, this initiative was a People’s Veto and was put on the ballot after a repeal of same-day voter registration was passed by the Legislature, signed by the Governor and after the opponents collected over 70,00 signatures of registered voters (in a few short months) to put the question before voters.

The response from the voters was clear – over 60% support the same day voter law and rejected the changes made by the Governor and Legislature at the time.

Maine has had same day voter registration since 1973 – before I was even born. Same day voter registration allows voters to make sure their votes count, even if they may have moved and forgotten to reregister, or if there has been another change in their life and they forget to notify their town clerk.

There is no compelling reason to repeal this important protection in Maine’s voting laws. We hope that we can all work together to encourage more eligible Mainers to vote in our elections, not create unnecessary burdens or hurdles that will only serve to dissuade and disenfranchise people from exercising their right to vote.

Thank you for your time and attention and your service to the people of Maine. I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.