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LD 349

Chair Hickman, Chair Supica, Senator Duson, Senator Timberlake, and Representatives Boyer, Chapman, Fredericks, Frost, Graham, Gramlich, Hymes, Malon, and Terry of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Maine Legislature Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I strongly oppose any efforts to repeal the laws that allow same-day voter registration. The ability to do same-day voting is not just a convenience—it's a fundamental safeguard for our democracy. It ensures accessibility, fairness, and inclusivity in our elections, protecting the right of every eligible voter to have their voice heard.

Same-day voter registration ensures that no eligible voter is denied the right to participate. Many people face significant barriers to registering in advance—whether due to lack of awareness, unpredictable schedules, or transportation challenges. Allowing individuals to register and vote on the same day eliminates these obstacles and empowers people to have a say in the political process. In a democracy, where elections shape the future of our country, it is unacceptable to disenfranchise individuals who are ready and eager to vote. Same-day registration allows them to engage regardless of their circumstances.

Marginalized communities—such as young people, people of color, low-income individuals, and those with unstable living situations—are often disproportionately affected by rigid voter registration requirements. Same-day voter registration directly addresses this issue by removing barriers and ensuring these communities can fully participate in the electoral process. Many students and low-income workers move frequently or struggle with busy schedules, making it difficult for them to register far in advance. Same-day registration allows individuals to exercise their right to vote without additional barriers, making the democratic process more inclusive and equitable.

Research shows that same-day registration significantly increases voter turnout, especially among younger and first-time voters. Allowing individuals to register on election day fosters an environment where more people are motivated to vote. This removes the confusion and frustration of missing deadlines, ensuring more eligible citizens can participate. Higher voter turnout means our government better reflects the will of the people, strengthening democracy. At a time when voter participation is often low, we need policies that encourage, rather than hinder, active participation.

We live in a rapidly changing world, where people move, change addresses, or experience disruptions, such as homelessness or job transitions. Same-day registration allows people facing these challenges to still have a voice in elections. It accommodates the reality that not everyone can plan their lives far in advance, ensuring they are not disenfranchised due to unforeseen circumstances. This flexibility is not just necessary—it's essential for ensuring that all eligible voters can participate in our democracy.

Critics of same-day voter registration often raise concerns about fraud. However, evidence consistently shows that same-day registration does not lead to an increase in voter fraud. The system has numerous safeguards to verify voters' eligibility, including identity checks and cross-referencing with other databases. Voter fraud is exceedingly rare, and same-day registration has been proven to increase the accuracy and integrity of the electoral process. Same-day registration laws are also tightly regulated, ensuring only eligible voters can participate. These safeguards maintain the integrity of our elections while providing greater access for those who need it.

In conclusion, same-day voter registration ensures that every eligible voter can access the ballot box. It promotes fairness, equity, and inclusivity while strengthening the integrity of our elections. Repealing this law would disenfranchise countless eligible voters and undermine our democratic process. I urge you to reject any efforts to repeal same-day voter registration. Instead, we must work together to protect and enhance

the right to vote for every eligible citizen. Our democracy is most potent when every voice is heard, and same-day registration is crucial to ensuring that happens.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Julie Orrego