



Testimony in Support of LD 313:

“An Act to Improve Voter Confidence in Electronic Ballot Counting by Requiring Ballots to Contain Unique Identifiers”

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 313, legislation that will enhance the integrity of Maine’s electoral process by requiring ballots to contain unique identifiers.

The Need for Voter Confidence in Election Integrity

Maine has a long history of civic engagement and voter participation, yet recent national and state-level concerns regarding election security and transparency have eroded public trust in electronic ballot counting systems. LD 313 addresses these concerns in a common-sense manner by requiring ballots to include unique, non-identifying numerical codes, allowing for enhanced auditing capabilities while preserving voter privacy.

Critics often argue that voter fraud is exceedingly rare; however, even the perception of electoral impropriety undermines confidence in democratic outcomes. A 2021 poll conducted by Monmouth University found that around 36% of registered voters feel that voter fraud is a major problem.¹ Establishing a unique electronic ballot identifier would be a simple and effective way to rebuild public confidence and enhance transparency in the electoral process.

Ensuring Transparency and Security

Public confidence in the electoral process is paramount in a functioning democracy. While electronic ballot tabulation has improved efficiency in vote counting, it has also introduced potential vulnerabilities that merit attention. Implementing unique ballot identifiers will allow election officials and independent auditors to:

- Verify election results with greater accuracy and efficiency.
- Detect and prevent potential errors or irregularities in the tabulation process.
- Strengthen post-election audits, thereby reinforcing the integrity of outcomes.

¹ https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/reports/monmouthpoll_us_062121/



Maine should take proactive measures to ensure that all citizens—regardless of political affiliation—have full confidence in the legitimacy of election results. By requiring unique ballot identifiers, LD 313 provides a practical, non-intrusive method of bolstering election security without compromising voter anonymity.

Safeguarding Voter Privacy

One of the principal concerns regarding any reform to election systems is the protection of voter privacy. LD 313 has been crafted in such a way that the unique ballot identifiers do not link back to individual voters, preserving the fundamental principle of a secret ballot. Instead, these identifiers serve solely as a mechanism for internal validation and verification of vote counts, ensuring that election audits are both comprehensive and efficient.

Alignment with National Best Practices

Maine is not alone in seeking innovative ways to improve election security and public trust. Several states, including Colorado and Georgia, have implemented enhanced audit procedures utilizing similar methodologies.^{2 3} The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and other election integrity organizations recognize the importance of robust auditing mechanisms, including the use of ballot tracking systems and identifiers that do not compromise voter anonymity.⁴ By adopting LD 313, Maine will position itself as a leader in election transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

At a time when election integrity is of paramount concern, LD 313 presents a balanced, nonpartisan approach to ensuring that all voters can have faith in Maine’s electoral system. We urge the committee to support this commonsense measure to enhance public trust in Maine’s elections.

For these reasons, Maine Policy Institute strongly recommends the committee vote **Ought to Pass** on LD 313. Thank you for your time and consideration.

² <https://sos.ga.gov/news/georgias-2024-statewide-risk-limiting-audit-confirms-voting-system-accuracy>

³ <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/post-election-audits>

⁴ https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/Post_Election_Tabulation_Audit_Guide_508.pdf

From page 24: “This (a Ballot-Level Risk-Limiting Audit) is typically enabled by printing identification numbers on each scanned ballot that correspond to the cast-vote records generated by a machine tabulator, but it is also possible to keep the ballots in the exact order they were scanned without printed identifiers.”