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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition To

LD 718 - An Act to Require Municipal Clerks to Issue Absentee Ballots Only to Residents of That Municipality and to Eliminate Ongoing Absentee Voter Status

March 3, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 718 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, the LPC guides MMA's advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

When reviewing this bill, municipal officials are left feeling a little confused. While the merits for maintaining credibility and security in the election process are important, the approach this bill takes appears to contradict that sentiment. In fact, local leaders believe that this bill would increase barriers by making it more difficult for voters who need a third party to assist them with their absentee ballots. Restricting a voter to only use a third party located within their municipality removes their freedom to choose a person they are comfortable with to assist them with performing their constitutional right. The potential for this bill to disenfranchise voters is too great a risk for our members to support.

Additionally, municipal officials are concerned that this would make it more difficult for clerks to perform their duties as it pertains to outreach efforts in nursing homes for example. If the provisions in LD 718 were enacted, municipal clerks who work in one community but reside in another would be prohibited from conducting this important task.

Another provision of LD 718 would remove the ability for an individual to apply for ongoing absentee voter status. However, local officials believe that removing this allowance would further disenfranchise voters by further placing restrictions on the methods in which they can cast their ballot.

Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.



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