

Mayor and Council Offices

Mark Dion

Mayor

April 25, 2025



Testimony of Mayor of the City of Portland, Mark Dion

Before

Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

In Opposition to

**LD 1437, Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Specify
That Only Citizens May Vote in Elections**

April 25, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, I write to you on behalf of the City of Portland to express our opposition to LD 1437, a proposed amendment to the Constitution of Maine that would explicitly state that only citizens may vote in elections.

This resolution is unnecessary, redundant, and risks fostering confusion and exclusion at a time when trust in democratic institutions is already strained. The Maine Constitution and Maine law already clear - only United States citizens are eligible to vote.[1] LD 1437 does not change any existing legal rights or protections. Rather, the proposal introduces language that may be perceived as divisive or inflammatory, particularly toward immigrant communities.

Portland is a city that values civic engagement, inclusion, and trust in public institutions. Like many other parts of Maine, Portland is home to a diverse and growing population, including many immigrants and refugees who are integral to our workforce, economy, and cultural fabric. While they may not yet have full voting rights, these residents contribute significantly to the life of our city and often aspire to full civic participation as future citizens.

[1] Me. Const. art. II, § 1 ("Every citizen of the United States of the age of 18 years and upwards . . . having his or her residence established in this State, shall be an elector for Governor, Senators and Representatives, in the city, town or plantation where his or her residence has been established."); 21-A M.R.S. § 111(1) ("The person must be a citizen of the United States.")

Proposals like LD 1437 send a discouraging message to these communities, suggesting that they are not welcome or that their contributions are somehow suspect. At a time when cities like Portland are working hard to build bridges of trust and encourage broad civic participation, symbolic measures that single out noncitizens risk undermining that work and harming our state.

We respectfully urge the Committee to reject LD 1437 and instead focus legislative energy on policies that expand civic access, protect voting rights, and strengthen Maine's democratic institutions for all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Dion", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dion
Mayor
City of Portland, Maine