

Jacklyn Stanley
North Yarmouth
LD 397

Testimony Opposing LD397: An Act to Require a Voter to Show Photographic Identification

To the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Jacklyn Stanley and I live in North Yarmouth, Maine. I'm writing to share my opposition to LD397.

My opposition to this bill mirrors my opposition to similar bills being heard:

The bill says the state will offer a free voter ID card, but it doesn't explain how people are supposed to get one, how the state will make sure everyone knows about it, or whether the process will be easy and accessible. It leaves all of that up to future rulemaking. Without clear plans and funding in place, there's no guarantee that the ID will actually be free in practice or easy for people to get.

On top of that, there's no long on-ramp or outreach strategy included. An implementation date of January 1, 2026 is short-sighted. That means voters who don't already have the right ID might show up at the polls and find out they can't vote.

That's not fair, especially to people in rural areas, older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents who may not have a driver's license or passport.

I'm also concerned that the bill won't allow college or university IDs as valid proof. That decision shuts out many young voters, even though those IDs often include photos and are issued by official institutions.

Furthermore, LD397 requires absentee voters to include a copy of their photo ID along with their absentee ballot. Other states, for example North Carolina, provide an exception form to be completed by voters without photo IDs, whether that lack is due to religious objections, lack of transport, recent natural disaster, etc.

The removal of multiple methods by which Maine citizens can prove their identity for the sake of voter registration is also unnecessarily restrictive, especially given the timeline issues and lack of clarity regarding free identification described above.

Maine has a good track record when it comes to elections. There's no widespread problem with people pretending to be someone else at the polls, or pretending to be someone else through absentee -- which the inclusion of a photo ID would not prevent, regardless. Our elections are safe and secure. This bill doesn't solve a real problem, but it creates new ones that could keep eligible voters from casting their ballot. Specifically, LD397 does nothing to support the voters it would impact most. Any bill that introduces new requirements to voting in the name of security must also shoulder the responsibility of mitigating the barriers it creates. By offering no outreach, no description of how the state will ensure access, and no timeline to ensure awareness, LD397 does not meet that standard.

Let's keep voting accessible for all Mainers.

Thank you for your time,
Jacklyn Stanley
North Yarmouth