

To: The Honorable Craig Hickman

The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Date: 5/2/2025

Re: LD 1149 – An Act to Require an Individual to Present Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is James Swan, and I live in Waldoboro. I am testifying in opposition of LD 1149. I oppose this bill because LD 1149 is a deeply flawed bill that would undermine the very foundation of Maine's trusted election system. Framed as a measure to improve election security, it is, in reality, a form of voter suppression that would impose unnecessary and harmful barriers to casting a ballot. If enacted, it would be among the most restrictive voter ID laws in the country.

The bill would require a photo ID not only to vote in person but also to vote absentee—while excluding many currently accepted forms of identification, including student and tribal IDs. It also seeks to repeal ongoing absentee voting, stripping away the convenience for voters who rely on receiving ballots automatically each election cycle. On top of that, it places unreasonable limits on the use and number of absentee ballot dropboxes, making it difficult—if not impossible—for many towns to offer them. It eliminates the ability to request an absentee ballot over the phone, cutting off access for those without reliable internet or mail service. And perhaps most concerning, it prohibits an authorized third party from delivering an absentee ballot on behalf of a voter—something many elderly, disabled, and rural Mainers depend on to participate in elections.

These restrictions are not just inconvenient; they are harmful. They will disproportionately impact senior citizens, low-income residents, people with disabilities, and voters in rural communities—those who already face challenges when it comes to getting to the polls. This bill will also place an unnecessary financial burden on taxpayers to create and manage a new voter ID system, despite no evidence that voter fraud is a real issue in Maine. Our elections are already secure, with safeguards in place to protect against fraud and interference.

What's more, this proposal isn't homegrown. It's part of a broader, out-of-state effort to restrict voting access, modeled on similar legislation recently passed in Ohio. That approach doesn't reflect Maine values. We have long been a national leader in voter turnout and election access thanks to our secure system, same-day voter registration, no-excuse absentee voting, and the absence of voter ID requirements. These are strengths, not weaknesses—and LD 1149 would threaten them all.

Maine's voting system works. It's trusted. It's secure. And most importantly, it's accessible. We should be proud of that and fight to protect it.

Sincerely,

James Swan

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