



Testimony in Support of LDs 38 and 397:

“An Act Requiring Photographic Identification for Voting” & “An Act to Require a Voter to Show Photographic Identification”

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 favor of LDs 38, "An Act Requiring Photographic Identification for Voting," and 397, "An Act to Require a Voter to Show Photographic Identification."

These bills represent a crucial step toward strengthening the integrity of Maine's elections. These bills are straightforward, common-sense reforms that align Maine's voting processes with the practices of the vast majority of states. By requiring photographic identification to vote, these bills ensure that every ballot cast is tied to a verified, eligible voter while preserving voting accessibility for all Maine citizens.

Protecting Election Integrity

Trust in the democratic process is essential to the health of our republic. Unfortunately, concerns about election security have increased in recent years, partly due to inconsistent voting requirements across states. Voter ID laws like the above LDs offer a proven, effective means of combating voter fraud, ensuring that all votes are legitimate and that elections reflect the true will of the people.

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 uniform photographic ID requirement is a simple and effective way to rebuild public confidence and enhance transparency in the electoral process.

Learning from Other States

Maine lags behind the rest of the country in adopting measures to verify voter identity. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), 35 states currently enforce some form of voter ID requirement, with 20 requiring photographic identification specifically.² In states like Indiana, Georgia, and Florida, where such laws

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

² <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id>



have been implemented, evidence demonstrates that voter turnout has remained strong while public confidence in elections has improved.

For example, a 2019 analysis by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that voter ID laws do not significantly suppress voter turnout, including among minority voters.³ These laws ensure that elections are free from interference while maintaining equal access for all eligible voters.

Maintaining Accessibility

These bills also recognize that accessibility is paramount in any election reform. The bills ensure that free photographic identification will be made available to those who lack it by requesting one from Maine's Secretary of State. Maine has long demonstrated a commitment to supporting voters, and this legislation continues that tradition by balancing election security with fairness.

In addition, the experience of other states shows that implementing voter ID requirements can be done smoothly and efficiently. By providing appropriate training for election officials and engaging in public awareness campaigns, Maine can enact these bills with minimal disruption to voters.

Conclusion

LDs 38 and 397 are a vital reform to ensure secure, transparent, and trusted elections in Maine. By implementing a photographic ID requirement, this legislation enhances confidence in the democratic process while protecting the fundamental right to vote. Maine Policy Institute urges the committee to support the above bills and recommends their passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.

³ https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26206/w26206.pdf