



TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman  
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: March 22, 2023

RE: LD 1055 An Act to Prohibit the Use of Ballot Drop Boxes

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

My name is Will Hayward. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as Advocacy Program Coordinator on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am here today to testify against LD 1055.

For 103 years, Leagues here in Maine and across the country have worked to educate and register voters and eliminate obstacles to voting. The League supports full voter participation by all eligible Americans, and we oppose efforts to create new barriers that block citizens' constitutional right to vote.

Election security and integrity are high priorities for the League. We closely monitor best practices in the election security field, and we have come before this committee many times to advocate for bills that would strengthen the security of Maine's elections.

Secure ballot drop boxes have been in use for decades without controversy. As you know, one of the critical factors in safely conducting Maine's 2020 elections during the pandemic was the installation of secure drop boxes at town and city halls around the state. The boxes were heavily used -- with no reports of tampering or misuse. Originally authorized as part of the pandemic emergency, the use of drop boxes by election officials was enshrined in law by the 130th Legislature. The legislation includes strict requirements that drop boxes be secure and monitored. You have seen all of these instructions in the bill before you, which strikes them all out.

In addition to physical security measures to protect drop boxes, the absentee voting process itself protects against potential fraud. Ballots placed in drop boxes are carefully examined before being accepted by election officials. Voters can track their own absentee ballots to make sure that they have been received and their vote has been counted.

Drop boxes are very popular with voters, and there is absolutely no evidence that they have led to any irregularities. In fact, there is evidence that they encourage turnout. Unfortunately, some states have decided to make it harder to vote, and part of that effort is to severely reduce the number of drop boxes

-- or eliminate them altogether. For example, a 2021 Florida law severely reduced access to drop boxes as part of a package of restrictions on voting.<sup>1</sup>

The facts do not justify banning drop boxes for any reason. They have proven to be safe, secure, and popular with voters. Speculation that someone *might* be able to tamper with a drop box does not justify rolling back a popular service that removes barriers to voting. The very few reported attacks on drop boxes in other states in 2020 had no impact on any election.<sup>2</sup>

While any security benefit from banning drop boxes is purely speculative, the negative impact of passing LD 1055 is clear. It would be harder to vote. Absentee voters who prefer not to trust the postal service, who are pressed for time, or who have physical challenges, would lose a simple and convenient way to return their ballots. We believe that this is an unacceptable price to pay, and we urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> The League of Women Voters and other voting rights organizations have challenged this law. See League of Women Voters of Florida v. Lee (now League of Women Voters of Florida v. Byrd)  
<https://www.lwv.org/legal-center/league-women-voters-florida-v-lee-now-league-women-voters-florida-v-byrd>

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Izaguirre and Christina A. Cassidy, "No major problems with ballot drop boxes in 2020, AP finds."  
<https://apnews.com/article/voting-rights-2022-midterm-elections-covid-health-wisconsin-c61fa93a12a1a51d6d9f4e0a21fa3b75>