



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

DATE: April 12, 2023

RE: LD 1344 – An Act to Improve the State's Election Laws by Amending the Laws Relating to Automatic Voter Registration

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

My name is Will Hayward. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as the Advocacy Program Coordinator on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am testifying in support on LD 1344.

The League of Women Voters of Maine is a nonpartisan political organization that has been working for over 100 years to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.

We support LD 1344 because it makes two small but important changes to improve Maine's elections: it improves the administration of our automatic voter registration (AVR) system and it modernizes outdated pieces of Maine statute. The change to AVR is a routine improvement: it ensures that people who register at the BMV between 7 and 21 days prior to an election are on the voter rolls on Election Day. In November 2022, League observers reported several instances of voters who had registered fewer than 21 days prior to an election at the BMV needing to re-register on Election Day; this bill will eliminate unnecessary time in line and confusion for a substantial portion of those voters. We believe this change will not require any major technical adjustments to the AVR system.

The second change is to bring part of Maine's election laws into the 21st century. According to the NCSL, Maine is the only state whose statutes specify that the voter list at the polling place is a paper list. While technology-based systems like electronic pollbooks may be several years down the line, we believe now is a good time to update Maine's statutes to eliminate specific references to paper voter lists. Making these changes will make any implementation of electronic pollbooks, widely considered a best practice in election administration, substantially easier. Together, these two changes will continue to improve Maine's election laws, and we urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1344.

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