



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

DATE: April 21, 2023

RE: LD 1500 An Act to Strengthen Maine's Elections by Requiring Video Monitoring of Drop Boxes and Amending the Laws Regarding Voter Rolls and Absentee Voting Envelopes

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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 Anna Kellar. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as the Executive Director on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Maine. The League opposes LD 1500.

The League of Women Voters supports voting systems that are secure, accurate, recountable, accessible, and transparent. We have appeared before this committee many times to testify in support of measures that would strengthen the security of Maine elections, including post-election audits and membership in the ERIC interstate voter registration database system.

Some of the changes to election law proposed in LD 1500 are redundant. The bill requires municipal registrars to cancel the registration of voters determined to have moved into another jurisdiction or to have died. As a member of the ERIC interstate online voter registration system, Maine receives reports containing data from the Social Security Death Index and change-of-address information from the US Postal Service. The office of the Secretary of State has detailed rules for double-checking the accuracy of this information before removing anyone from the voter rolls. This accords with accepted good practice around the country. And, in accordance with federal law, the Secretary's office conducts routine voter list maintenance to identify and remove the names of voters who have moved or died. We see no need to add the language that LD 1500 proposes to the current voter list maintenance law.

This bill would prohibit the use of absentee ballot return envelopes that include any party designation in any election. The last legislature changed the law to prohibit party designation on general election envelopes. Extending this prohibition to primary elections, as LD 1500 apparently intends, would interfere with the procedures that election officials use when conducting primaries. They need to match the envelope with the correct ballot. In-person voters have to announce their party when voting in a primary for the same reason. The law should stay the way it is now.

Finally, LD 1500 would mandate video surveillance monitoring of ballot drop boxes and retention of the recordings for one year. The law currently requires that drop boxes be monitored by municipal staff or

law enforcement. While 24/7 closed-circuit television monitoring would be an ideal security upgrade, the cost and maintenance of such a system would be beyond the means of many cities and towns. If that additional expense meant that some cities and towns could not afford to deploy drop boxes, voters would be the losers – unless the intent of this bill is to cover that cost to the municipalities. Current law already includes physical security specifications for drop box construction. In addition to these physical security measures, 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. There is no evidence to justify adding an expensive monitoring system to the current checks and balances against drop box tampering.

We find no justification for any of the measures in this bill. They would hinder voters and election officials without adding to the security of Maine’s elections. Please vote Ought Not to Pass.

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