



TO: The Honorable Louis Luchini
The Honorable Chris Caiazzo, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: April 5, 2021

RE: LD 1126 - An Act To Update the Voter Registration Process

Good morning Senator Luchini and Representative Caiazzo.

My name is Anna Kellar. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as the Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am testifying in support of LD 1126 An Act to Update the Voter Registration Process.

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. Leagues here in Maine and across the country have worked ceaselessly to educate and register voters, celebrate our right to vote, eliminate obstacles to voting, and make government at all levels more accessible and responsive to citizens. The League supports full voter participation by all eligible American citizens, and we oppose efforts to create new barriers that block citizens' constitutional right to vote.

In 1973, Maine was the first state in the country to enact same-day registration (SDR). For two generations, and still today, SDR is one of the most important measures that states can take to improve voter participation. Many other states followed Maine's lead, and today all of the top-performing states, in terms of voter turnout, offer SDR. We are proud to have been a leader in this important reform.

Flash forward. Times change, Technology changes. Voters adapt. Our election systems must keep pace. Online voter registration (OVR) is the next threshold reform to keep Maine a leader in voting systems. OVR is secure, it's cost-effective, and it's good for voters. Over 40 other states have already enacted this important reform.

- OVR makes voter registration more accessible for voters who confront a variety of obstacles, including those with mobility issues, elderly voters, disabled voters, economically disadvantaged voters, and rural voters, among others.
- OVR likewise encourages participation in our elections by new and younger voters, many of whom are accustomed to using online services and resources for virtually every aspect of their lives, but are less familiar with more traditional avenues for voter registration.

- OVR adds convenience, with no compromise in security, for voters of every age and demographic who change their address within a town, move to a different municipality in Maine, or change their name as a result of marriage or other reason.

The 40 states that already have experience with OVR can provide proven blueprints for convenient, secure, efficient online voter registration. While, many of these states restrict OVR to voters with a driver license or state ID, we strongly applaud the sponsors of this bill for providing access to voters with social security numbers, ensuring a system that's accessible to a broad swath of voters, not just those who already have easy access to voting systems.

The League encourages these steps to modernize elections and voter registration to make it more accessible, secure, and efficient. In other states, local election officials have cited improved integrity of the voter rolls that results from reduced dependency on illegible handwritten applications. With passage of LD 1126, Maine voters for the first time will be able to view and change their own information. The League of Women Voters views LD 1126 as one more building block to provide Maine voters with dynamic, easy-to-use online voting tools.

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