



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

DATE: January 12, 2022

RE: An Act To Protect Election Integrity by Regulating Possession of Ballots and Voting
Machines and Devices

Good morning Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and members of the committee.

My name is Ann Luther. I'm a resident of Trenton. I am here today as a volunteer on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am testifying in support of LD 1779.

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.

In furtherance of its mission, the League supports voting systems that are secure and transparent and believes that in Maine we have enjoyed a generations-long record of professional, nonpartisan, voter-friendly administration of elections through our trusted town and city clerks and our laws protecting election administration. Maine citizens have long had confidence in their election processes and their election officials, which likely contributes to Maine's relatively high voter-participation rate.

L.D. 1779 builds on those existing laws designed to ensure the integrity of elections through measures securing the ballots on which voters have cast their votes. Existing provisions are important and go a long way toward protecting election integrity but do not expressly require clerks to retain possession, custody, and control of ballots, ballot containers, or voting machines and devices. L.D. 1779 would provide clerks with an express basis to deny any requests for a transfer of custody of ballots or voting devices not in compliance with law and to require the presence of an appropriate public official in the case of any inspection that is in compliance with law. We also supported LD 1155 An Act to Provide Transparency and Audits in the first session, and we hope it will be funded this year.

While L.D. 1799 cannot address all of the ways our elections may come under attack, it will at least prevent ballots from getting handed over to those who seek to undermine confidence in our elections or to unduly influence their conduct. Our election officials, regardless of party affiliation, and the courts are entrusted with the ability to review election ballots within the public's view. L.D. 1779 will ensure that ballots cannot be taken out of their custody. Just as it protects the integrity of the ballots

themselves, this bill protects the integrity of voting machines and associated devices by requiring authorization by the Secretary of State to permit anyone other than municipal election clerks to take possession of them. For these reasons, we believe that the measures proposed in L.D. 1779 deserve the full support of the committee, and we urge your support.

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