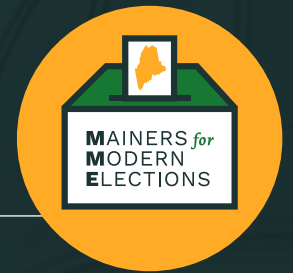


MAINERS FOR MODERN ELECTIONS POLICY GUIDE



ABOUT MAINERS FOR MODERN ELECTIONS

Mainers for Modern Elections is a coalition that is committed to ensuring that our right to vote safely transcends politics and partisanship. We advocate for safe, secure, modern elections. Our coalition is committed to securing equitable access to the ballot for every eligible Maine voter.

Ensuring that Mainers can vote safely and securely—especially amidst a global public health crisis—is not a partisan issue. It is a common sense issue, whether you are a Republican, Democrat, Independent or otherwise. Voting is not a privilege, it is a right. Our government leaders have a duty to ensure that every Mainer can vote safely and without added burdens.

POLICY POSITIONS

- 1. Online Voter Registration [OVR].** Voters should be able to register to vote and update their voter registration safely and securely online.
- 2. Election Improvement Package.**
 - a. Dropbox standards that promote accessibility and security.** Maine towns should have clear standards for dropboxes, including being allowed to offer multiple secure ballot dropboxes.
 - b. Accessible and consistent statewide cure process for absentee ballots.** Innocent mistakes like forgetting to sign an envelope should not deprive Mainers of their vote and voters should have the opportunity to correct them.
 - c. Consistent and usable coding of rejections.** If a mailed ballot is rejected, the reason why should be clearly documented in a manner consistent across the state. This is crucial to identifying potential flaws in ballot design that can lead to a disproportionately high number of unwarranted rejections of lawfully cast mailed ballots, particularly for uniformed service members abroad.
 - d. A commitment to in-person voting.** While a larger portion of Mainers elected to cast their ballot via absentee in 2020, many eligible Maine voters still rely on in-person voting options and Same-Day Registration to participate in Elections. We must ensure that in-person options that voters from all parties utilize are properly staffed and remain open during the entire voting period. This includes permanently expanding the dates voters can cast an in-person absentee ballot to include the Friday prior to Election Day and providing accessible hours they can do so.
- 3. Modernizing List Maintenance.** The majority of US states are Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) members and Maine should be one of them — or join a program with similar benefit. ERIC is a non-profit, nonpartisan corporation governed by a board of directors made up of member-states. Participation in ERIC helps states keep their voter rolls clean and up-to-date by tracking duplicate registrations and voters who have moved or died, improving the integrity of voter rolls and promoting voter confidence in the electoral process. 30 states and the District of Columbia are ERIC members.

POLICY BENEFITS

- 1. Cost Savings and Efficiencies** – By implementing these reforms strategically and in tandem with other already required upgrades, there is an opportunity for a modernized system to save money and time for clerks and the state alike. For example, an [online registration costs roughly \\$0.03 to process](#), while each paper form costs an average of \$4.72 in labor. Because voters submit hundreds of thousands of paper forms each year, OVR could save Maine more than \$900,000 each election cycle through reduced paper forms. By streamlining the registration, absentee, and ballot submission process, voters and clerks will have less last-minute data entry, shorter lines on Election Day, and can better anticipate election costs due to well-maintained voter rolls.
- 2. Increased Security** – While each of these election modernization measures is important in its own right, when adopted together, their collective impact on election security is substantial. For example, combining OVR and ERIC membership has compounding benefits for the integrity and accuracy of our state's voter file. This, in turn, makes absentee balloting more secure, reduces the financial strain on our state, and increases accessibility for all eligible voters who have a right to make their voices heard in our democracy.
- 3. Improved Turnout** – Maine was once the nation's leader in voter turnout and accessibility, but in recent years Maine has fallen behind other states, all of which have expanded absentee balloting and allowed for online voter registration. By passing these policies and modernizing our elections, Maine can lead again.