

**The Maine Heritage Policy Center
Testimony to Oppose LD 2067
“An Act To Authorize the Automatic Continuation of
Absentee Voter Status until the Termination of That
Status”**

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck and distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as a policy analyst at The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in opposition to LD 2067.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center appreciates this committee’s work to increase voter turnout and make voting as easy as possible for Maine citizens. However, we are fearful that creating an ongoing absentee voter status would have unintended consequences.

The current process requires voters to fill out an absentee ballot application every time they intend to utilize an absentee ballot. As the Secretary of State’s website says, “you don’t have to be out-of-town or have any other reason to take advantage of this easy way to vote at a time that is most convenient for you.” Voters can currently make a telephone request or use the Secretary of State’s website to make a request for an absentee ballot.¹ Even immediate family members can obtain absentee ballots for their loved ones.² In other words, this process is already extremely easy and intuitive for all voters. Why then, do we need to create an ongoing absentee ballot program?

For one, an ongoing absentee ballot program would undoubtedly create more work for clerks. Section 4, subsection 2 of the bill would require election clerks to check each signature with past documents and notify each voter when a discrepancy is present. While this is a valuable check on an ongoing absentee ballot system, it would be time consuming. This committee might want to consider whether this program would truly increase turnout and if it is worth increasing town clerks’ workloads.

As time passes, this program would likely become problematic. For example, a voter could forget they have an absentee ballot coming to them or move without officially changing their address. In both scenarios, we would not feel comfortable with blank ballots lying around, despite the signature check by the clerks. We do not want the program outlined in this bill to delegitimize the current absentee ballot program with new errors and inefficiencies. Put simply, we subscribe to the adage, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/absenteeguide.html>

² Ibid.

We the people of Maine...

THE MAINE HERITAGE POLICY CENTER

Because the current absentee ballot program is extremely intuitive, The Maine Heritage Policy Center urges the committee to vote, "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 2067. Thank you.