

Testimony to Support LD 322

"An Act To Strengthen Maine's Election Laws by Requiring Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting"

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck, and distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as the policy analyst for The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 322, "An Act To Strengthen Maine's Election Laws by Requiring Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting."

The Maine Heritage Policy Center supports this bill because it would help to increase the integrity of our voting system. As of 2018, at least 35 states required some form of identification to vote and 17 required photo identification according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.¹ Maine lags behind these other states in taking steps to prevent voter fraud or impersonation.

It is critical that the state prevent voter fraud to the best of its ability. Right now, we do not require any form of identification at the polls in Maine. Despite voter fraud being inherently low in the United States and in Maine, photo ID laws should be considered as an extra layer of protection to decrease the number of cases overall.² Ensuring that eligible voters' votes count is important to election integrity. If individuals who are ineligible to vote can do so in our elections, it effectively negates the votes eligible voters cast, suppressing the voice of law-abiding citizens.

Critics of photo identification laws claim they discourage individuals from voting and decrease turnout by suppressing disadvantaged populations. This claim was not realized in a recent study on strict ID laws, which showed they had no effect on turnout.³

Furthermore, individuals currently need a photo ID when buying alcohol or tobacco products, boarding a plane, driving a car, among many other activities that are conducted daily by Mainers. Why then, is voting considered less important than these activities?

Maine should implement voter ID legislation to add an additional layer of protection within our voting system to improve the integrity of our elections. These laws do not suppress disadvantaged populations, and so we urge the committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on this bill. Thank you.

¹ <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>

² <https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud>

³ https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/19-076_e4a87f32-1d6a-437a-922a-9fb14ec2c2fe.pdf