



565 Congress St Ste 200 Portland ME 04101 (207) 797-0967 Fax (207) 797-4716
145 Lisbon St Ste 201 Lewiston ME 04240 (207) 782-7876 Fax (207) 782-3236
27 State St Ste 44 Bangor ME 04401 (207) 990-0672 Fax (207) 990-0772
www.MainePeoplesAlliance.org

Testimony in Support of LD 1463, An Act To Create an Automatic Voter Registration System

April 24, 2019

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck, and Honorable Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

My name is Taryn Hallweaver and I am the Political and Legislative Director for the Maine People's Alliance. Our 32,000 members stretch from Kittery to Fort Kent. We work to engage everyday people in the political process, because we believe our democracy will make the biggest difference in Mainers' lives when as many people participate as possible. I am pleased to offer testimony today in support of LD 1463, An Act To Create an Automatic Voter Registration System.

Every American citizen has the right to vote. Maine's track record of high turnout in elections is something to be proud of, and we still have room for improvement. Automatic voter registration (AVR) will strengthen our democracy even more by modernizing our system and making sure nobody slips through the registration cracks.

AVR is a process that states around the country are adopting to update our current paper-based system with a modern system that uses electronic government data to identify and register eligible Americans to vote. AVR also uses the same data to actively update voter registration information when people indicate a change of address to participating agencies.

Automatic voter registration will make voting easier for more people—a goal that we can all agree with. In particular, AVR helps:

- Seniors, many of whom relocate during retirement or towards the end of their lives, and have difficulty getting to a town clerk's office to update their registration or fill out a paper-based voter registration card.
- People with disabilities, many of whom have lost mobility and are challenged as well in terms of getting to a town office.
- Rural voters, who historically have lower voter registration rates, partly because of frequent moves, poor roads and services, limited town office hours, and less access to Internet.

Whereas across the country, so-called "Voter ID" laws, redistricting, and purging of voter rolls are disenfranchising voters, especially low-income people and people of color, AVR will modernize our election system, helping continue our tradition of high turnout and continue Maine's reputation as a national leader.

AVR is a common-sense, non-controversial update to our election system.

Thank you,

Taryn Hallweaver
Legislative Director
Maine People's Alliance
taryn@mainepeoplesalliance.org