



*Department of the Secretary of State*

*Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions*

Matthew Dunlap  
*Secretary of State*

Julie L. Flynn  
*Deputy Secretary of State*

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**LD 1232 “An Act To Require the Secretary of State To Automatically Register Nonregistered Persons Who Are Qualified To Vote through Records of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles”**

*Testimony Provided by Julie L. Flynn, Deputy Secretary of State, April 18, 2017*

**Senator Mason, Representative Luchini and Members of the Committee:**

The Secretary of State supports the concept of Automatic Voter Registration (AVR), as it has been implemented successfully in other jurisdictions, and is purported to assist with having a more accurate voter list and a more streamlined process for voter registration. Moreover, with regard to the Motor Vehicle provisions, we do see value in automating the “Motor Voter” registration process, which already is required under federal law, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA). However, we are not prepared to support this bill language as written, because we have not had time to study AVR or how it might best be implemented in Maine.

Maine has enjoyed a high rate of registered voters (as a percentage of Voting Age Population or VAP) as a result of Election Day Registration. (Maine’s active status registered voter number as of the close of the polls on November 8, 2016, was 98.7% of VAP). Accordingly, we have not focused on some of the new election programs such as AVR. There are a myriad of details that have to be studied and determined before we will be comfortable to recommend the best approach. Similar to what we did in 2007 with an Early Voting bill, we would ask that the Legislature turn this bill into a Resolve that directs the Secretary of State to study the subject and report back to the Legislature. Depending on the pending ruling from the Supreme Judicial Court on Ranked Choice Voting and subsequent action by the Legislature, we may need to have until the 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature to complete this study.

I would be happy to answer any questions of the Committee, either now or at the work session.