



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony
In Support of

LD 1365: **An Act to Require Photograph Identification for Voting**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Reagan Paul and I represent House District 37. I am here before you today to present by bill LD 1365: **An Act to Require Photograph Identification for Voting**. I won't rehash all the information about the benefits of voter ID. Senator Pouliot's bill was very similar to mine, with one exception; my bill would also require a photo ID to receive an absentee ballot.

I will use my time to discuss that aspect and address the concerns presented by the Secretary of State. Secretary Bellows testified that in 2011, Secretary of State Charles Summers formed an Elections Commission to study voter participation, the current system for registering voters and the conduct of elections in the State. She reported that, over 12 years ago a panel voted 4-1 against recommending this measure at the time. One sentence was quoted out of 28 pages. What failed to be mentioned is that they also included a list of factors which would support a voter ID law and used language such as "if it is true that" when referring to their own stats and "concerns." May I remind you all that this was a panel of 5 people, whose task was to provide recommendations that do not reflect the people of Maine according to a recent WABI poll, with over 3,400 respondents. 83% supported a Voter ID law, with only 17% opposing. An ought not to pass on these voter ID bills is basically just telling the people of Maine that you don't care what they think or about what they want. But that wouldn't be the first time I have seen that in this building.

The Secretary of State's testimony for Senator Pouliot's bill included similar concerns as her testimony in 2021. I could spend hours testifying in front of this committee refuting the supposed concerns over Voter ID laws. If feelings were facts, then I guess everyone would be right, but facts are facts and they don't change. Just because you believe something doesn't necessarily make it so. Again, I would remind you to ask 83% of the Maine people who disagree with those who oppose this.

Justice William Stokes from the Maine Superior Court has claimed that State interests "including the desire to prevent voter fraud outweigh any burdens that may be imposed on voters." He goes on to say when ruling on a case regarding ballot harvesting that "such a prohibition serves the State's important interest in deterring and preventing election fraud." Let me repeat that: deterring and preventing. In that lawsuit, voter fraud was mentioned in explaining the court's reasoning. The ruling said: "Although there has been considerable discussion and debate about the prevalence (or lack thereof) of voter fraud, there can be no question as to the State's compelling interest in reasonably

regulating how a ballot is handled and by whom when the voter chooses not to appear for in person voting." If this committee chooses to be against Voter ID for in-person voting, although that does not reflect the will of the Maine people, could you all get on board with photo ID for absentee ballots? As our superior court has reasoned, the State has a compelling interest in regulating who handles ballots and thereby providing proof of identification is reasonable. Again, please remember that the courts have also ruled that slight burdens on the right to vote are outweighed by the State's compelling interest to deter and prevent election fraud.

Let's talk a moment about racism and white supremacy because it would seem that if you listen to the rhetoric that that is the root of all problems in society. In my experience, when you have to start throwing the name cards, it is a sure signal that there are no facts to be had. We all know the game being played: use emotional language to elicit emotional responses... get people to feel so they won't think. So, instead of looking at data from reputable sources, opponents of Voter ID start with a faulty premise so they therefore have a faulty conclusion.

The study that proved Voter ID laws are discriminatory and impact elections was picked up by outlets such as Think Progress and the Washington Post. But, a follow up study suggests the findings that continually get repeated to this day were bunk. According to researchers at Stanford, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania (not exactly conservative powerhouses), the original study was based on surveys of voters that are extremely unreliable, skewing the results. These universities report the original study just doesn't have the data to prove their supposed conclusions. They report several calculation errors and found that based on the available research so far, voter ID laws do not have a strong effect on voter turnout. So to summarize: all these university studies show that voter ID laws do not suppress votes. Not only does voter ID not suppress votes, they do not impact minority voter turnout. We now have Georgia as our example for that. In the four years after Georgia implemented its then controversial voter ID law in 2008, turnout among black and hispanic voters increased and even outpaced overall population growth among those demographics. A poll conducted by the University of Georgia School of Public and International Affairs found no black voters who said they had a poor experience at the polls and that even through 2022, turnout continues to break records.

Previous studies from UC San Diego and Michigan State used 2006-2014 data from the CCES which stands for Cooperative Congressional Election Studies to study the effect of voter ID laws. Of course, they concluded a negative impact on minorities, but let me tell you more. In 2006, CCES, the source of their data, estimated turnout rate was 10 points below actual turnout in 15 states, most of which showed practically zero turnout according to this group. Also, the study's main model was found to be faulty. They were even picking up the effect on voter turnout before a State had even passed a voter ID law. I could go on and on, but the point is once again is faulty information = faulty conclusions.

I'd like to share a little bit from Pamela Denise Long, a trainer and consultant for implementing trauma informed care and anti-racism. As a black American, I believe she can speak to the topic better than I. She says that voter ID laws do not violate civil rights or the National Voter Registration Act. She contends that the truth is the opposite. In a NewsWeek article, she reported that not protecting our elections is what hurts the black community. She says that rather than focusing on finding a solution, liberals instead have chosen to fetishize the problem, cultivating a victim consciousness and nurturing a delusional savior complex. The truth is, there is one party waging a war against voters identifying themselves. With more and more illegals invading our state, voter protection should be of utmost importance. It is undeniable that possibly allowing non-citizens to vote weakens the power of Americans to decide our destiny. What could hurt black Americans more?

Americans across the board in study after study believe an ID requirement maintains the integrity of our elections, and that includes Americans descended from slaves. In a survey by Monmouth University, well over 80% of non-white participants supported voter ID. So why are we still calling

voter ID racist? If you start with a presumption of racism, especially without any proof, you look for ways to confirm it. When you can't, you have to resort to emotional language. Why isn't it racist to assume minorities can't figure out how to get an ID? I think that is peak racism.

One last area to address would be the impact on elderly Mainers. But to address this I will refer back to the 2011 study performed by Charlie Summers that our current Secretary of State referred to. He reported voter ID laws would provide an effective tool against voter fraud. The report went on to say that in today's post 9/11 world, the need for personal identification is widespread throughout American society and is needed for many common activities that impact older Mainers as well. Mainers need ID to go on an airplane, obtain Social Security or MediCare, be admitted to a hospital, purchase alcohol, obtain a public transportation pass, open a bank account, stay at a hotel, obtain certain prescription drugs, get a document notarized, and many other activities that are too numerous to list. I've read the concerns from elder groups, but more likely than not the elderly in our State participate in at least one of the aforementioned activities that require identification. Reminder, the courts support slight burdens, if one exists. Another reminder: a free ID would be provided if they don't already have one which may actually work to help the elderly access other aspects of society that they may not be participating in.

The study further suggests that barriers to obtaining a photo ID are overstated and can be overcome and that the cost to implement a free voter ID system, which is what this bill would allow, may be exaggerated as it will be necessary to provide IDs to a very small number of people. Even Shenna Bellows herself couldn't give you a number except a guess, with no data to back it up.

In conclusion, it is impossible to say that voter fraud is non-existent as Aaron Frey has alluded to. When you are not looking for a problem, you probably won't find one. From my experience on the campaign trail, voter rolls are ripe for fraud. Time after time I came across houses with up to 9 voters supposedly living in them that were mobile homes that had been hauled away, houses that had burned down, or houses that were abandoned. Again, these addresses showed voters on the roll. That is just my small neck of the woods. The reality is, voter fraud does exist and should be taken seriously as the courts have instructed. From the 35 states that have some sort of voter ID requirement, we can actually conclude facts. Voter ID laws do not suppress anyone's vote, do not harm minorities, do not change turnout, and in reality election fraud often goes undetected and even when it is discovered, investigators and prosecutors often opt to take no action. Voting is sacred and should be treated as such. Let's do our duty and honor our oath first and foremost to uphold the Constitution. This bill does not violate the Constitution as the courts have determined. Because we have passed that test, let's look at the will of the people, where the majority of Mainers want these laws put into place. Lastly, let's be good legislators and protect and secure the sacred duty of voting. Let's restore Mainer's faith in the voting process by taking election integrity seriously.

Thank you for your time.