



TESTIMONY OF GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders & Maine Women's Lobby

**LD 253—Ought Not to Pass
An Act To Strengthen Maine's Election Laws by Requiring Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting**

**LD 557—Ought Not to Pass
An Act To Require Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting**

**LD 1083 – Ought Not to Pass
An Act To Create a Voter Identification System**

**LD 1099 – Ought Not to Pass
An Act Regarding Election Reform**

Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

April 7, 2021

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Mary Bonauto, and I am an attorney at the Maine office of GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders. GLAD works primarily in New England and seeks equal justice under law without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV status through litigation, policy and public engagement. We also share this testimony on behalf of the Mine Women's Lobby, which promotes policy which increases the health, wellness, safety, and economic security of women and girls, with a focus on the most marginalized populations and communities. We urge this Committee to oppose: LD 253, An Act To Strengthen Maine's Election Laws by Requiring Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting; LD 557, An Act To Require Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting; LD 1083, An Act To Create a Voter Identification System; and LD 1099, An Act Regarding Election Reform.

Voting is a political right for individuals, fundamental to our democracy, and should not be limited or made more difficult as these bills propose.

We have a long history of high voter participation and civic engagement, and over 76% of Maine's voting-eligible population voted in the 2020 general election, ranking Maine the third highest in voter participation rates in the country.¹ Our robust and effective voting system has room for improvement, such as with on-line voter registration, but these bills all move in the wrong direction.

¹ United States Elections Project, 2020 November General Election Turnout Rates (2020), available at <http://www.electproject.org/2020g>

Our State and American democracies are predicated on citizens of age being able to cast their votes on candidates and issues and for those votes to count. That promise is what gives our governments their legitimacy and allows our society to move forward together despite policy disagreements.

GLAD and Maine Women's Lobby urges the Committee to vote "ought not to pass" on each of these bills. Thank you for your consideration.