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May 9, 2023

## **Testimony Opposed to LD 1365, “An Act to Require Photograph Identification for Voting”**

Greetings Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. My name is Alf Anderson, and I am an Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine.

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our more than 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony. Today I am here to testify in opposition of LD 1365.

AARP has been fighting to protect the rights of all Americans 50+ to vote freely, easily, and safely for more than 35 years. We have a long history of non-partisan voter education and engagement, in addition to advocacy for fair and straightforward election procedures that help increase the participation of voters aged 50 and older. LD 1365 concerns us because requiring photographic identification may inadvertently create barriers to voting because many voters lack a photo ID. Older voters in particular may no longer have a license, or other identifying document and it is very difficult for many to obtain one, especially individuals living in very remote parts of the state. Data by Project Vote showed that 7 percent of voters lack a proper photo ID. That equates to 16 million voters nationwide.<sup>1</sup> Requiring a photo ID may also suppress voter turnout. A Government Accountability Study that looked at turnout in states that made changes to require a photo ID showed that the measures decreased turnout by 1.9 to 3.2 percentage points.<sup>2</sup>

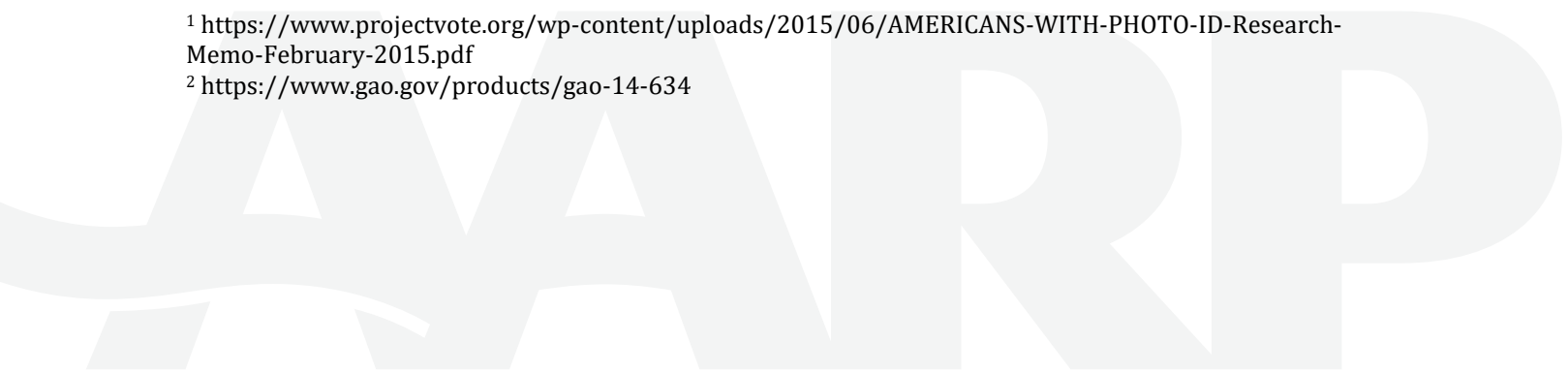
LD 1365’s photo identification requirements risk an adverse impact particularly to voters living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, or congregate settings. Many of these voters live with limited incomes and/or disabilities, and they may find it difficult to acquire the necessary identification to vote. Even if a free ID is offered by the state, there will be barriers for these voters to acquiring one as many have mobility issues and can’t travel to acquire their ID or have other financial barriers. The American Civil Liberties Union estimates that the combined cost to obtain even a free ID can range from \$75 to \$175.

Complicating things further, there are no provisions in LD 1365 to educate voters on these changes, which could catch many off-guard, leaving them unable to exercise their constitutional right. This could lead to many eligible voters, who have been voting for decades, being disenfranchised when

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.projectvote.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/AMERICANS-WITH-PHOTO-ID-Research-Memo-February-2015.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-14-634>



they arrive to vote at the polls unaware that they need to have a photo ID. Seniors could be particularly affected.

There is little evidence that this legislation is needed to secure elections in Maine. The Heritage Foundation's voter fraud tracker has only confirmed two instances of fraud around voting in Maine since 2010, and they did not involve voter ID, rather double voting instead.<sup>3</sup> It is unclear that this bill will even increase voter confidence in elections. A 2022 survey of Maine voters found that two-thirds of Mainers felt "very confident" that their votes were accurately counted.<sup>4</sup>

AARP supports your goals of secure elections but requiring a photo ID does not increase election security and data shows that it actually reduces turnout. Changes to the voting process should ensure increased access, fairness, and simplicity; not added barriers and complexity.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important bill. If you have questions for me, I can be reached at [aanderson@aarp.org](mailto:aanderson@aarp.org) or at 207-330-1147.

Sincerely,  
Alf Anderson  
Associate State Director, Advocacy & Outreach  
AARP Maine

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud/search?combine=&state=ME&year=&case\\_type=All&fraud\\_type=All#](https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud/search?combine=&state=ME&year=&case_type=All&fraud_type=All#)

<sup>4</sup> [https://scholars.unh.edu/survey\\_center\\_polls/721/](https://scholars.unh.edu/survey_center_polls/721/)