



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 1148

H.P. 753

House of Representatives, March 18, 2025

**An Act to Improve Access to Absentee Ballots for Municipal
Elections for Uniformed Service Voters and Overseas Voters**

Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

Robert B. Hunt
ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative SHAGOURY of Hallowell.
Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec and
Representatives: GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, MALON of Biddeford, MOONEN of
Portland, SUPICA of Bangor.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §780, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 131, §24, is further
3 amended to read:

4 A uniformed service voter or an overseas voter may request an absentee ballot as
5 provided in section 753-A or by submitting a federal application or form requesting an
6 absentee ballot as provided in section 783. With respect to any election for federal office,
7 a clerk or the Secretary of State may not refuse to accept or process any otherwise valid
8 voter registration application or absentee ballot application submitted by a uniformed
9 service voter or an overseas voter on the grounds that the voter submitted the application
10 more than 3 months before the election for which the application will be used. An
11 application or request for an absentee ballot for a uniformed service voter or overseas voter
12 that is accepted pursuant to section 753-A or section 783 remains valid for 18 months from
13 the date of receipt of the application and entitles the voter to receive absentee ballots for all
14 federal and state elections during that period and for any municipal election for which the
15 uniformed service voter or overseas voter is eligible that is to be held on the same date as
16 a statewide election.

17 **Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §783, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 563, §9, is amended
18 to read:

19 **4. Electronic transmission of absentee ballots.** Authorizing the electronic
20 transmission of absentee ballots to uniformed service voters or overseas voters; ~~and~~

21 **Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §783, sub-§5**, as amended by PL 2015, c. 350, §1, is further
22 amended to read:

23 **5. Electronic receipt of absentee ballots.** Authorizing the electronic receipt of voted
24 absentee ballots from uniformed service voters or overseas voters by a method authorized
25 by the Secretary of State; ~~and~~

26 **Sec. 4. 21-A MRSA §783, sub-§6** is enacted to read:

27 **6. Central receipt and issuance of local absentee ballots.** Receiving from a
28 municipality holding a municipal election on the same date as a statewide election a copy
29 of that municipality's local absentee ballot at a central location for the purpose of issuing
30 that local absentee ballot to a uniformed service voter or overseas voter who is eligible to
31 receive that local absentee ballot in order to ensure expedited delivery of local absentee
32 ballots.

33 **Sec. 5. 21-A MRSA §783, 2nd ¶**, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 563, §9, is amended
34 to read:

35 The Secretary of State shall adopt rules to administer the central issuance and
36 processing of absentee ballots, including rules that provide for the examination, counting
37 and storage of ballots in the same manner as regular absentee ballots. The Secretary of
38 State shall also adopt rules to administer the issuance of a local absentee ballot from a
39 municipality holding an election on the same date as a statewide election to a uniformed
40 service voter or overseas voter, including rules related to the receipt of a local absentee
41 ballot from a uniformed service voter or overseas voter and for the delivery of the local
42 absentee ballot to the uniformed service voter's or overseas voter's municipality by the close

1 of the polls on election day. Rules adopted in accordance with this section are routine
2 technical rules as described by Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

3 **Sec. 6. 30-A MRSA §2529, sub-§3** is enacted to read:

4 **3. Municipal election on same date as statewide election.** If a municipal election is
5 to be held on the same date as a statewide election, the clerk shall submit to the Secretary
6 of State or designated vendor a copy of the local ballot as soon as the ballot is ready to be
7 issued.

8 SUMMARY

9 This bill directs municipalities to provide a copy of their local ballots to the Secretary
10 of State for all municipal elections to be held on the same date as a statewide election. It
11 provides that an application or request for an absentee ballot for a uniformed service voter
12 or an overseas voter for any municipal election that is to be held on the same date as a
13 statewide election for which the uniformed service voter or overseas voter is eligible is
14 valid for 18 months, as is currently provided for all federal and state elections. The bill
15 authorizes the Secretary of State to receive local ballots from municipalities holding such
16 elections and to issue those ballots to uniformed service voters and overseas voters who are
17 eligible to receive them. It also authorizes the Secretary of State to receive absentee ballots
18 for such municipal elections from a uniformed service voter or an overseas voter at a central
19 location and to deliver those local ballots to the uniformed service voters' or overseas
20 voters' municipalities by the close of the polls on election day.