



129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

Legislative Document

No. 272

S.P. 84

In Senate, January 22, 2019

An Act To Allow Voting by Mail

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MIRAMANT of Knox.
Cosponsored by Representatives: EVANGELOS of Friendship, HUBBELL of Bar Harbor,
MASTRACCIO of Sanford, McCREIGHT of Harpswell, PLUECKER of Warren, RISEMAN
of Harrison, RYKERSON of Kittery.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §671-A** is enacted to read:

3 **§671-A. Voting by mail**

4 Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, beginning November 1,
5 2020, all elections for President of the United States, United States Senator, United States
6 Representative to Congress, Governor, State Senator and State Representative and on
7 referendum questions must be conducted by mail.

8 **Sec. 2. Commission to Implement Voting by Mail established.** The
9 Commission to Implement Voting by Mail, referred to in this section as "the
10 commission," is established.

11 **1. Membership.** The commission consists of 7 members as follows:

12 A. Two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, including a
13 member from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the
14 Legislature;

15 B. Three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the
16 House, including members from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of
17 seats in the Legislature;

18 C. The Secretary of State or the secretary's designee; and

19 D. The Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee.

20 **2. Chairs.** The first-named Senate member is the Senate chair and the first-named
21 House of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission.

22 **3. Appointments; convening of commission.** All appointments must be made no
23 later than 30 days following the effective date of this section. The appointing authorities
24 shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have
25 been completed. When the appointment of all members has been completed, the chairs
26 shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more after the
27 effective date of this section a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the
28 chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the
29 commission to meet and conduct its business.

30 **4. Duties.** The commission shall make recommendations for implementing voting
31 by mail in the State for all primary and general elections for President of the United
32 States, United States Senator, United States Representative to Congress, Governor, State
33 Senator and State Representative as well as all elections on people's veto questions,
34 initiated measures, bond issues, constitutional amendments and other legislatively
35 proposed referenda. Prior to making its recommendations, the commission shall examine
36 the laws, rules and implementation of voting by mail in Oregon and gather information
37 on past or current proposals for voting by mail in other states.

1 The commission's recommendations must, at a minimum, address the following aspects
2 of the voting by mail system:

3 A. Deadlines for voter registration and enrollment;

4 B. Processes for periodic verification and correction of voter mailing addresses,
5 including a process for individuals who are homeless or who do not have access to mail
6 service from the United States Postal Service to participate in the elections;

7 C. Processes and deadlines for mailing ballots to voters and for voters to return
8 completed ballots by hand or by mail;

9 D. Criteria and processes for in-person voting on election day as an alternative to
10 voting by mail; and

11 E. Processes for ensuring the integrity of ballots, including verification of voter
12 signatures, challenges to voter signatures and validation of challenged ballots by voters.

13 **5. Staff assistance.** The Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing
14 services to the commission.

15 **6. Report.** No later than December 4, 2019, the commission shall submit a report
16 that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the
17 Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. The Joint Standing Committee
18 on Veterans and Legal Affairs may report out legislation to the Second Regular Session
19 of the 129th Legislature based upon the report.

20 SUMMARY

21 This bill requires that, beginning November 1, 2020, all primary and general elections
22 for President of the United States, United States Senator, United States Representative to
23 Congress, Governor, State Senator and State Representative as well as all elections on
24 people's veto questions, initiated measures, bond issues, constitutional amendments and
25 other legislatively proposed referenda be conducted by mail. The bill also establishes the
26 Commission to Implement Voting by Mail to make recommendations, including
27 proposed legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,
28 which may report out legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature
29 for implementing voting by mail.