

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and
Legal Affairs LD 619 - RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment
to the Constitution of Maine Regarding Early Voting

February 25th, 2019

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck, and members of the
Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 619 -
RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of
Maine Regarding Early Voting

My name is Julia Fitz-Randolph and I live in Pemaquid. I am
here today on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State
Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) as a person of faith committed to
MUUSAN's shared belief in strengthening democracy by
protecting and enhancing voter rights.

One of the fundamental principles of Unitarian Universalism
is the use of the democratic process. As an expression of our
faith, many Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations engage in
the work of voter registration, election reform, and protecting
voting rights and democracy.

LD 619 will give municipalities the option to implement true early voting for up to 30 days before an election, whereby voters would complete a ballot and put it directly into the ballot box or scanning machine. Early voting contributes to a more secure and orderly process for the conduct of elections, and reduces pressure on election officials and poll watchers who, under the current absentee ballot system, are required to hand count or scan absentee ballots on election night.

These are all compelling reasons to pass this bill, but I'm here today to speak on behalf of marginalized communities who will directly benefit from its passage.

LD 619 will help eliminate the long lines at the polls on election day. A single mother can drop her kids off at school, vote, and get to work on time if the line at her polling station moves quickly. An hourly wage worker will be able to vote in a timely manner without jeopardizing loss of pay or increased transportation costs. And those without transportation can arrange public or private options during reduced fare time slots thus encouraging them to get to the polls.

As you reflect on the merits of LD 619, it essentially comes down to the merits of increasing voter turnout. For all Mainers.

For the reasons articulated above, MUUSAN urges this committee to vote "Ought to Pass." Thank you for your consideration.