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**Testimony in support of LD 1631,
to the Joint Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,
May 1, 2019**

Senator Luchini, Rep Schneck, distinguished members of the Committee.

My name is Peter Lehman. I live in Thomaston.

I am here testifying on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist Church's State Advocacy Network. We are a faith-based organization that seeks to support and protect our democratic institutions. We urge you to support LD 1631.

As people of faith, our first principle is the inherent worth and dignity of all people. We are all children of the same God. That's why we are so strong in our theological support of democracy: inherent worth and dignity means that all people should have a voice.

We support this formulation by the Secretary of State for the same reasons that we supported LD 619—because it increases access and voter turnout.

Testifying for that bill we said that a compelling reason to pass it is the marginalized communities who will directly benefit from its passage.

Early voting 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 1631, it essentially comes down to the merits of increasing voter turnout. For all Mainers.

Thank you for your attention and support.