



State of Maine
131st Maine Senate
Senate Republican Office
House Republican Office

PRESS BRIEFING – ISSUES AFFECTING MAINE ELECTIONS
MARCH 7, 2023
WELCOME CENTER/PRESS ROOM
AFTER SESSION (approximately 12:30 p.m.)

What: Issues affecting Voter, Ballot and Election Integrity

Who: Senators Trey Stewart, Jeff Timberlake, Matt Pouliot
Lisa Keim, Eric Brakey, James Libby, Peter Lyford, Matt Harrington

Policy Goals covered in today's briefing:

Voter integrity from registration to the voting booth
Third-party influences and interference in Maine elections
Ballot integrity and process from printing to the ballot box

Introduction & Background (Sen. Stewart)

According to Harvard University Kennedy School's [Electoral Integrity Project](#) (EIP), the confidence in the American election process has been on a downward trend since 2012. The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) results in their [2019-2021 Global Report](#) dropped from an index score of 84 in 2012 to 23 in 2020.

Electoral integrity in the U.S. is ranked 59th worldwide. The marked decline in the PEI index began in 2016 when Democrats began challenging the legitimacy of the presidential election that year. In their [December 2020](#) report, EIP indicated systemic problems across many states, including:

- Campaign coverage by local press and TV news lacking fairness and balance while social media amplified misinformation;
- Campaign finance lacking transparency and equitable access;
- A worsening of confidence in the integrity of American elections and falling trust;

While Maine has traditionally scored in the top 10 nationally for voter integrity, the State has likewise seen declines in several PEI scores from 2012 to today, namely the indexes for unbalanced or unfair media coverage, unfair electoral laws and trust in the results.

Voter integrity from registration to the voting booth (Sen. Pouliot)

Policy: To promote voter confidence in the integrity of Maine's voter registration laws and enforcement of proper identification standards at the polling place, which is overwhelmingly

supported by 80% of Americans [according to Gallup](#) and 63% of Mainers according to a recent [UNH Pine Tree Poll](#). Currently 35 states require it, with two more (Nebraska and Ohio) implementing it.

Solutions to explore:

- To manage the pandemic-era in-migration to prevent duplication in other jurisdictions.
- To ensure the voting process maintains transparency and accountability at both the local and state level for citizens, including absentee.

Legislation:

- An Act to Require a Person to Show Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting (Sen. Pouliot)
- An Act to Require Identification on Absentee Ballots (Sen. Keim)

Third-party influences and interference in Maine elections (Sen. Stewart, Sen. Keim)

Policy: To identify external influences and threats to the electoral process either through private funding that aims to affect the process or lack of transparency and accountability in foreign groups and campaign finance rules that allow for such interference.

Solutions to explore:

- To prevent efforts like ZuckerBucks and BidenBucks from influencing state elections
- To provide more oversight by State Government when funds are directed to Maine

Legislation:

- An Act to Prohibit Government Contracting Organizations from Influencing Elections (Sen. Brakey)
- An Act to Prohibit the Private Funding of Elections (Sen. Stewart)
- An Act to Increase State Oversight of Election Funding by Requiring Approval by the Legislature (Sen. Keim)

Ballot integrity and process from printing to the ballot box (Sen. Timberlake)

Policy: To promote voter confidence in the integrity of Maine's ballot process laws and enforcement of ballot procedure from printing to the ballot box.

Solutions to explore:

- Separation of absentee ballots from the regular election-day process
- Prevention of chain-of-custody issues from voter to the ballot box

Legislation:

- An Act to Prohibit Ballot Harvesting by Preventing a 3rd Person from Returning More than 2 Absentee Ballots Per Day (Sen. Brakey)
- An Act to Require Identification on Absentee Ballots (Sen. Keim)
- An Act Regarding Absentee Voting Records (Sen. Libby)

Closing remarks, Q/A (Sen. Stewart)