

**LPC Poll – March 4, 2025**  
(N=24)

	<b>LD 397 Voter ID</b>	<b>LD 784 1<sup>st</sup> Responder Medical Screenings</b>	<b>LD 811 Muni Approval Sports Wagering</b>	<b>LD 819 Battery Storage Systems</b>
<b>Support</b>	39%	33%	61%	59%
<b>Oppose</b>	52%	13%	9%	9%
<b>NFNA</b>	9%	50%	22%	27%
<b>Track</b>	-	4%	9%	-
<b>No Position</b>	-	-	-	5%

**Comments**

[LD 397](#) *An Act to Require a Voter to Show Photographic Identification* (Sponsored by Rep. Paul of Winterport)

**Support**

- We have an obligation to make sure our elections are secure and asking for voter ID is not a difficult ask. You need photo ID for so many other things that making it a requirement to vote is not asking too much.
- It's not unreasonable or an undue burden.
- People have photo ID. This is not a high bar to get over.
- We are pretty loose on checking identity of voters, not much additional time or effort, IDs aren't costly or inaccessible as portrayed.
- We basically need an ID for most everything to prove our age, very few things actually ask us to prove we are who we say we are.

**Oppose**

- It is likely that the Secretary of State and the Maine Town & City Clerks Association will oppose it along with the League of Women Voters.
- Continued erosion of the 19th Amendment and Voting Rights Act of 1965, welcome to fascist America citizen, papers please.
- I support ID at the polls, but this is excessive.
- I don't like the idea of saying that this creates obstacles to voting; that isn't relevant to the municipal world. There are a few reasonable approaches that I think make it relevant to oppose, primarily relevant to absentee voting. I think that a general comment about submitting a copy of an ID seems overburdensome for a world that is pivoting to more

and more technology-based communication. What does this do for online absentee requests or telephone requests? Do they have to mail us a copy of their ID? The approach to determining what an acceptable form of ID is should be consistent across platforms, whether Elections/SOS, Vital Records, etc. We should be creating consistency. While she may propose well-intentioned legislation, there are far more questions remaining than answers.

- This will disenfranchise so many voters! The addition of photo ID for absentee voting will make it harder for people to vote by absentee. Not everyone has access to copies to copy ID. If a picture is acceptable and clerks have to keep a record on file the town will have to pay to print it. This bill really just hurts the elderly and working population in my opinion. The people supporting this bill are not the ones that have to administer it and deal with the disgruntled voters, our local clerks are. It also conflicts with current law allowing any official document that would require proof of ID to receive as proof of ID to register to vote.
- While I understand the desire to root out voter fraud, there is no evidence of "dead people" voting and the clerks have opposed these measures so we should, too.
- For the same reasons that the LPC opposed a similar bill. I also oppose the added requirement for photographic identification for absentee ballots. I am not sure how that would work for third parties that pick up and drop off ballots for family members. It is added work for the clerks.
- This is a solution in search of a problem. This creates additional logistical headaches not just for clerks, but for the SOS office too. It also creates needless expense for the SOS office to provide free voter IDs. Rejecting mail-in ballots because the voter forgot to include the xerox of their photo ID is just one more thing for the clerk to have to chase down. It will disenfranchise people and do nothing to prevent non-existent voter fraud.
- Needlessly makes voting more difficult and potentially prohibitive/exclusive.
- More hurdles for voters when there is little to no evidence that there is a problem in Maine. When I went to UMO many years ago, I was without a driver's license or passport and my actual residence was Orono and it would have been a huge problem to vote in my hometown 150 miles away. I was able to vote in Orono and actually became a delegate to a state party convention. Refusing to honor a student ID (but honoring a concealed weapons permit) seems a clearly partisan effort to restrict voting rights to specific demographics. It does not pass the smell test for me.
- Putting additional burdens on students to prove residency when they are, *ipso facto*, Maine residents, is not acceptable.

- This may lead to voter disenfranchisement. It will certainly impact the flow of voters during an election, however, it may be a way to prevent voter fraud (I don't believe that we have voter fraud, but many do). The North Berwick Town Clerk did mention that if passed it should allow student IDs issued by school departments as an acceptable ID for students who do not have their driver's license.
- To remain at the table to support the use of Voter ID and lend input into the reduction of the forms of identity being eliminated as an issue. Also to discuss how the voter ID would impact seniors requesting continuous absentee ballots for future elections. In general, I support the use of voter ID but want a well-designed and successful program. A simple examination of how other states are using voter ID should provide the reasonable persons test.

LD 784 *An Act to Require Health Insurance Coverage for Specialized Risk Screening for First Responders* (Sponsored by Sen. Bailey of York Cty.)

### **Support**

- The need for first responders is becoming more critical. This may help keep them.
- Ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Other legislative means should be countering insurers passing these costs off.
- I think our first responders should have this as part of the initial hiring process.
- My sense is that this could help with recruitment and with long-term health and workers comp issues.
- The rationale makes sense, though I understand the cost considerations.

### **Oppose**

- Unintended consequences.

### **NFNA**

- It appears to be a plus for saving money down the road, but the state-federal conflict seems to be trouble. Any municipality could offer it now, just they bear the full financial burden.
- This may have an impact on the Health Trust, however, I feel that new employees should not be rejected due to their health conditions as it limits the employee pool for new employees. If there is information from the Health Trust on the issue, I am willing to change my vote based on concerns by the health trust.
- I see both sides, but don't want to find us [pitting]some members against others. I also think the concern about discrimination-based exposure should be ironed out before

additional regulations are enacted. Another well-intentioned piece of legislation that doesn't adequately address the problem.

- For all of the reasons provided in your summary taking this approach (requiring insurance coverage) is problematic. I fully support specialized screening and in Auburn we provide cardiac, cancer, and PTSD screening on an ongoing basis for all our first responders funded through the city budget. In effect everyone in the city is supporting this through property tax. To shift the cost to insurance will mean that the plan participants, regardless of where they are located, will bear the burden of funding the screenings while residents that participate in a plan that doesn't have first responder participants won't be supporting the screening.
- I like the idea of providing extra service to our first responders. They are put into hazardous situations all the time and should be monitored to keep them healthy regardless of age or gender.
- I am unsure if MMEHT supports or opposes LD 784. Also, it appears that employers would be required to offer this health benefit to part-time first responders as well. We currently do not offer health benefits to part-time employees, and this could potentially be a large expense for smaller municipalities, which then becomes a property tax burden. However, I also think it's important that the LPC does not appear to be unsupportive to our first responders. Therefore, I would vote NFNA.
- I like the idea behind this bill (ounce of prevention worth a pound of cure and all that), but have the same concerns raised by the opponents as described in your email.
- I really don't have enough of a stance.
- To stay at the table with input as to how the "pre-testing" can relate to the rebuttable presentations of cardiovascular occurrence in public safety. Also to lend input into employer rights if an assessment identifies a risk and clarify what can be done to address the risk/pre-occurrence if so identified. It is not just a matter of who is paying the cost, it is what can be done with the information and can the employer, and associated insurances, avoid large claims in the future by implementing such a program. The argument of providing different levels of benefit for the use of the insurance based upon employment class is a cover for the insurance market's profit margins. There are numerous benefits that only apply to an individual once a qualifier is identified and not otherwise extended to all people.
- Concerns as follows: "access based on employment status is unique and could run afoul of current federal anti-discrimination regulations by requiring plans to offer different benefits to different people under the same policy. Additionally, absent a federal level authority to provide access to healthcare services based on employment, the tests and assessments proposed in the bill would be available to all and in turn increase health insurance premiums."

- This appears to be a possible can of worms. I think I can see both arguments and need more technical advice on the fiscal note and the ramifications down the road. I'd love to hear the input that you get from LPC members.
- Has the Health Trust taken a position on the bill?

### **Track**

- This seems more a local budgeting concern, just need to be aware of upcoming cost increases.

[LD 811](#) *An Act to Require a Municipal Public Hearing and Vote Before a Sports Wagering Facility May Be Established* (Sponsored by Rep. Brennan of Portland)

### **Support**

- Municipalities should be included in the licensing process.
- I'm all in favor of public input.
- Home rule, similar process to license to serve alcohol.
- This should absolutely require community support.
- I think neighbors and other residents should be aware and get to have their voices heard when these venues are proposed. I don't think it is that high of a bar for a business owner to get over either.
- Provides a municipality input into the siting of a facility.
- I do think municipalities should be made aware and a part of the process because of ordinances and home rule. These types of establishments may not be allowed by ordinance where they are trying to hold the facility. I like the ability of the applicant to oppose the decision if needed.
- Residents should have a say in whether sports wagering facilities are established within their borders.
- This seems like the sort of thing that would already require a planning board hearing in a town as a change-of-use. All sorts of other vices already require municipal public hearings (liquor licenses, adult-use cannabis), so it only seems fair that gaming would require a public hearing as well.
- Increased public awareness and voice should always be supported in these types of endeavors. Gambling enterprises often end up hurting the immediate region and gutting

quality of life locally, come flush with promises never kept, so an opportunity for a community to speak to it and explore it before it comes to fruition is advisable.

- Towns and cities should know and have a say when something will impact their residents and have the ability to hear from them on if they are in favor or not.
- Though I may not know what valid argument exists to keep municipal governments from having some input into matters like this (which could clearly have an impact in some localities), I can see the value in local input and oversight. Having been a town manager in some small communities I was sorry to see the concealed weapon permitting system being taken away from a review by the selectmen and local law enforcement. I can recall some disturbed people that we knew well enough to present a danger to themselves and others. This seems to be in that same kind of vein.

### **Oppose**

- Like all similar bills that have come before it, this creates a lot of unnecessary work for our clerks and election staff.
- Not sure why this needs to be law. It seems maybe this was prompted for a specific municipality? I think it falls under home rule authority and that municipalities should be able to manage this independently through ordinances/charters, zoning, and planning board review to determine whether such facilities are allowed or not.

### **NFNA**

- In the case of home rule, I'd support it but is this really an issue and do municipalities legally have the authority to grant them.
- I am not opposed to having a public hearing on a gambling site. State law currently calls for a public hearing on a liquor license for the first five years of the licensing, so I do not believe this is a burden on the municipality and insures public opinion is sought and received.
- This seems likely to source from a specific situation, so I'm hesitant to support; however, it grants municipalities the ability to exercise greater authority. It seems reasonable to have a public hearing on initial application; however, I don't think it is worth burning equity on something that means so little. A municipality can already utilize local planning and approval regulations to facilitate a public hearing if the appropriate rules are approved and in place.
- I don't believe that the great majority of Maine's municipalities have any interest in this issue.

### **Track**

- Downgrade to a track position.

LD 819 *An Act Concerning the Status of Battery Storage Systems with Regard to the Business Equipment Tax Exemption* (Sponsored by Rep. Sato of Gorham)

**Support**

- Make them pay taxes just like any other utility.
- The risks of battery storage are large. Towns will have to prepare their fire depts, for starters, at great expense. Subsidizing renewables is great in theory, but we are paying for it as taxpayers and again as ratepayers. Those profiting need to pay their share.
- I am a bit conflicted as I don't think they should get any exemption and should be fully taxable, however, at least this bill requires the larger facilities, greater than two megawatts, to be fully taxable.
- I think municipalities and taxpayers should be sick and tired of the tax benefits offered to these out-of-state, multi-national investment firms that are building out solar projects and benefitting from the generous tax credits funded by the Maine working class. We should be fighting to get anything and everything related to solar development on the local tax rolls and off the State's charitable dole.
- It brings these types of energy storage equipment in alignment with other utility type exemptions.
- This reduces BETE exemptions and reduces burdens on the property taxpayers.
- There should be less business tax equipment tax exemptions for alternative energy and telecommunications, period. It is lucrative with constantly changing and upgrading of valuable technology and equipment that maintains and improves its lucrative capabilities.
- Especially in the case that the storage could be indefinite which means could be getting a tax break on something just sitting and never being actually used.

**Oppose**

- Who will determine the capacity? Assessors? Industry? Setting up municipalities to be engaged in costly appeals. These projects will be for profit, why should they be exempt at all regardless of capacity? Stop eroding the property tax base for the benefit of corporations, shifting the burden onto residential owners. If the bill was amended to exclude them from exemption entirely, it would be support.
- This is a legitimate business in a community and should not be excluded or exempt from BETE.

**NFNA**

- Vague. I would like more information as to why 2 + megawatts are excluded. If these larger systems can be charged as personal property and not receive the exemption it will be more tax revenue for municipalities.
- Just because I don't fully understand the rationale for why.
- Why 2MW? Google tells me that a 2MW system is about the size of a shipping container. That seems pretty substantial, and, given the fire hazard from even small amounts of Li batteries, I would like to see smaller facilities -- .5MW or 1MW -- contribute to the town's tax base (and therefore fire protection) as well. So I'm fine with some exemption for these, but given the risk and cost of fires from even small Li batteries, I'd like to see more of these storage systems contribute to the tax base and have the cut-off be lower than 2MW.
- **Cons:** 1. Possible perception of inequitable targeting, as there are many other statewide business assets of multi-million dollar value (but not battery storage) that are currently BETE eligible (i.e. equipment at Abbott Labs, Idexx, etc.) and/or eligible for the solar exemption (i.e. massive solar farms, if they had a connection agreement prior to 6/1/24, but not if connection agreement is later). 2. Furthermore, I wonder if such battery storage would be considered as part of a larger climate-friendly/sustainable solution when paired with other renewable energy solutions. As such, I would think such initiatives would be backed by various stakeholders to be incentivized (i.e. eligible for some exemptions) vs. fully taxable and thus disincentivized. I currently see that the recent/drastring 180 change to new Solar Farms now being excluded from exempt status has now killed many projects that were in the pipeline, as they are no longer economically viable for the developers in many instances. **Pros:** I can also understand the other side of the problem, with too many exemptions without full reimbursements from the State having problematic effects for municipalities. **Amendment?:** Also, one minor issue for possible amendment consideration: Wondering if the bill should include an "as of" date to clarify when this exception takes effect. For example, "As of the 4/1/2025 Assessment Date" and thereafter these types of equipment are not eligible for BETE. May not be necessary, but such specification to tax law amendments is often helpful. For example, if this bill ended up becoming law, but not prior to the upcoming 4/1/25 assessment date, the owner may convincingly claim that this exclusion wouldn't begin until 4/1/26.
- I honestly don't know enough about this issue to take a clear position. Is this aimed at charging stations or short-term hydropower storage? Would it include off-grid and private power units?
- I'd like to understand more about the motivation of introducing the bill.

### **No Position**

- I don't know enough about this to offer an opinion.