MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document   No. 197

H. P. 159   House of Representatives, February 1, 1977
   Referred to the Committee on Election Laws. Sent up for concurrence and
ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk
   Presented by Mr. Silsby of Ellsworth.
      Cosponsors: Mr. Raymond of Lewiston, Mrs. Huber of Falmouth, Mr.
      Kilcoyne of Gardiner.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED SEVENTY-SEVEN

AN ACT Concerning Registration on Election Day.

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

21 **MRSA** § 631, as last amended by PL 1973, c. 782, § 8, is repealed and the
following enacted in its place:

§ 631.   Time or schedule; regular elections

The registrar shall accept registrations at a regular election according to
the time schedule prescribed by this section.

1.   Municipality of 2,500 or less.   In a municipality of 2,500 or less popula-
tion, he shall accept registrations during the time prescribed by the municipal
officers on at least one business day during the period from the 6th business
day to the 11th business day before election day. He shall not accept regis-
trations on election day, except as set forth in subsection 6, or during the 5
business days next prior to it.

2.   Municipality of 2,501 to 5,000.   In a municipality of 2,501 to 5,000 pop-
ulation, he shall accept registrations from 1 to 5 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m. on
the 6th to 8th business days next prior to election day. He shall not accept
registrations on election day, except as set forth in subsection 6, or on the 5
business days next prior to it.

3.   Municipality of 5,001 to 10,000.   In a municipality of 5,001 to 10,000
population, he shall accept registrations from 1 to 5 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m.

on the 6th to 10th business days next prior to election day. He shall not accept registrations on election day, except as set forth in subsection 6, or on the 5 business days next prior to it.

4.   Municipality of 10,001 to 24,000.   In a municipality of 10,001 to 24,000 population, he shall accept registrations from 1 to 5 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m. on the 8th to 14th business days next prior to election day. He shall not accept registrations on election day, except as set forth in subsection 6, or on the 7 business days next prior to it.

5.   Municipality of 24,001 or more.   In a municipality of 24,001 or more population, he shall accept registrations from 1 to 5 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m. on the 10th to 18th business days next prior to election day. He shall not accept registrations on election day, except as set forth in subsection 6, or on the 9 business days next prior to it.

6.   Election day registration.   The registrar of a municipality shall accept on election day the registration of any person who has attained legal voting age within 30 days prior to election day or who has become eligible to vote in that municipality within 30 days prior to election day.

STATEMENT OF FACT

This bill ensures that voter registrations shall not be conducted on election day or during the 5 business days preceding election day in any municipality. Election day registration is allowed, however, for any person who has reached legal voting age or who has become eligible to vote in the municipality within 30 days prior to election day. Recent experience indicates that the number of persons trying to register on or near election day is increasing. This increase puts a heavy burden on boards of registration and registrars to register a large number of persons in a short, hectic period of time. In addition, a large number of new registrations means that local boards of registration or registrars do not have the time to check with other municipalities to ensure that the new registrant is registered to vote in only one place. As a result, it is now possible for persons to register to vote in a number of municipalities without danger of detection, a situation which can lead to a greater incidence of voter fraud.

In order to avoid this heavy burden on municipalities near election time, and to ensure that voter fraud is discouraged, this bill eliminates voter registration on or near election day, except in very limited circumstances.