

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

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Legislative Document

No. 272

S.P. 84

In Senate, January 22, 2019

### An Act To Allow Voting by Mail

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Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MIRAMANT of Knox.  
Cosponsored by Representatives: EVANGELOS of Friendship, HUBBELL of Bar Harbor,  
MASTRACCIO of Sanford, McCREIGHT of Harpswell, PLUECKER of Warren, RISEMAN  
of Harrison, RYKERSON of Kittery.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §671-A** is enacted to read:

3 **§671-A. Voting by mail**

4 Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, beginning November 1,  
5 2020, all elections for President of the United States, United States Senator, United States  
6 Representative to Congress, Governor, State Senator and State Representative and on  
7 referendum questions must be conducted by mail.

8 **Sec. 2. Commission to Implement Voting by Mail established.** The  
9 Commission to Implement Voting by Mail, referred to in this section as "the  
10 commission," is established.

11 **1. Membership.** The commission consists of 7 members as follows:

12 A. Two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, including a  
13 member from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the  
14 Legislature;

15 B. Three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the  
16 House, including members from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of  
17 seats in the Legislature;

18 C. The Secretary of State or the secretary's designee; and

19 D. The Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee.

20 **2. Chairs.** The first-named Senate member is the Senate chair and the first-named  
21 House of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission.

22 **3. Appointments; convening of commission.** All appointments must be made no  
23 later than 30 days following the effective date of this section. The appointing authorities  
24 shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have  
25 been completed. When the appointment of all members has been completed, the chairs  
26 shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more after the  
27 effective date of this section a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the  
28 chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the  
29 commission to meet and conduct its business.

30 **4. Duties.** The commission shall make recommendations for implementing voting  
31 by mail in the State for all primary and general elections for President of the United  
32 States, United States Senator, United States Representative to Congress, Governor, State  
33 Senator and State Representative as well as all elections on people's veto questions,  
34 initiated measures, bond issues, constitutional amendments and other legislatively  
35 proposed referenda. Prior to making its recommendations, the commission shall examine  
36 the laws, rules and implementation of voting by mail in Oregon and gather information  
37 on past or current proposals for voting by mail in other states.

1 The commission's recommendations must, at a minimum, address the following aspects  
2 of the voting by mail system:

3 A. Deadlines for voter registration and enrollment;

4 B. Processes for periodic verification and correction of voter mailing addresses,  
5 including a process for individuals who are homeless or who do not have access to mail  
6 service from the United States Postal Service to participate in the elections;

7 C. Processes and deadlines for mailing ballots to voters and for voters to return  
8 completed ballots by hand or by mail;

9 D. Criteria and processes for in-person voting on election day as an alternative to  
10 voting by mail; and

11 E. Processes for ensuring the integrity of ballots, including verification of voter  
12 signatures, challenges to voter signatures and validation of challenged ballots by voters.

13 **5. Staff assistance.** The Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing  
14 services to the commission.

15 **6. Report.** No later than December 4, 2019, the commission shall submit a report  
16 that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the  
17 Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. The Joint Standing Committee  
18 on Veterans and Legal Affairs may report out legislation to the Second Regular Session  
19 of the 129th Legislature based upon the report.

## 20 SUMMARY

21 This bill requires that, beginning November 1, 2020, all primary and general elections  
22 for President of the United States, United States Senator, United States Representative to  
23 Congress, Governor, State Senator and State Representative as well as all elections on  
24 people's veto questions, initiated measures, bond issues, constitutional amendments and  
25 other legislatively proposed referenda be conducted by mail. The bill also establishes the  
26 Commission to Implement Voting by Mail to make recommendations, including  
27 proposed legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,  
28 which may report out legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature  
29 for implementing voting by mail.