



## Your Voice Matters: Voting & Older Adults

### Why SMAA Is Sharing This Information








The Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) not only provides services for older adults and caregivers, but also serves as a **public advocate**. Area Agencies on Aging monitor and comment on policies that affect older people<sup>1</sup>.

We share resources like this to ensure older Mainers have clear, accessible, and unbiased information so they can make their own decisions and exercise their right to vote with confidence.

### Why Voting Can Be Harder for Older Adults

We know that civic participation is one of the most powerful ways older Mainers can shape the future of their communities. Yet, research shows that older adults often face barriers to voting — from mobility challenges and accessibility issues to limited transportation and complex processes. These barriers can make it harder for older adults to have their voices heard, even though their perspectives are vital to decisions affecting health care, housing, caregiving, and community life.

According to a U.S. Senate report<sup>2</sup>, older adults face unique barriers when it comes to voting:

-  **Accessibility issues** – limited ramps, long distances, or poorly marked entrances.
-  **Transportation difficulties** – lack of affordable, reliable, or accessible rides to polling places.
-  **Long wait times** – standing in line can be challenging with health or mobility concerns.
-  **Absentee/mail ballot hurdles** – complicated steps, deadlines, or paperwork.
-  **Technology barriers** – confusing machines or online systems.
-  **Polling place closures** – fewer locations, especially in rural areas.
-  **Caregiver responsibilities** – balancing care for others while finding time to vote.

### Get Informed About Question 1 on the Ballot

We encourage you to learn more about Question 1 on the November 4, 2025 Ballot. A “yes” vote on question 1 supports significant changes to the election procedure that will greatly impact the ability of older adults and family caregivers to vote.

Do you want to change Maine election laws to eliminate two days of absentee voting, prohibit requests for absentee ballots by phone or family members, end ongoing absentee voter status for seniors and people with disabilities, ban prepaid postage on absentee ballot return envelopes, limit the number of drop boxes, require voters to show certain photo ID before voting, and make other changes to our elections.

**Remember: Your vote is your voice.** Older Mainers have shaped our communities for generations — and your voice is as important as ever in today’s decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Older Americans Act. § 1321.61 Advocacy responsibilities of the area agency.

(a) The area agency shall serve as the public advocate for the development or enhancement of comprehensive and coordinated community-based systems of services in each community throughout and specific to each planning and service area.

(b) In carrying out this responsibility, the area agency shall:

(1) Monitor, evaluate, and comment on policies, programs, hearings, levies, and community actions which affect older individuals and family caregivers which the area agency considers to be aligned with the interests identified in the Act

<sup>2</sup> [Voting Rights Report.pdf](#) (put full citation in)