

EASY-TO-READ VOTER GUIDE

Maine Referendum Election: November 5, 2013



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LWV[®] LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS OF MAINE
EDUCATION FUND



About This Guide



The League of Women Voters of Maine Education Fund produced this voter guide about the 2013 Referendum Election.

This information is nonpartisan. This means we do not endorse or support any position on the ballot questions.

No explanations of ballot and bond issues express the views of the League or any of our distribution partners including any of the schools, nonprofit organizations, or agencies. The League of Women Voters of Maine never supports or opposes candidates or political parties.



Questions & Copies Of This Guide

The text is online at www.lwvme.org



If you have questions, call 1-888-207-1839 or email us at voterguide@lwvme.org.



Voting Is Important



Why Vote?

You can help make important changes in the way your state and country are run. This year is a Referendum Election. This means that on Election Day, Maine voters will answer bond questions (more on pages 11-16). In some cities and towns, you may also be asked to vote on candidates for local offices or to vote on local issues.



What Is A Bond?

- The State of Maine borrows money by issuing bonds.
- The State pays interest on the amount it borrows.
- The people must vote to approve the bonds issued by the State of Maine.
- If the voters approve the bond, the Treasurer borrows money to fund the bond projects.
- The State pays back the amount it borrowed plus interest within a fixed time period.



Is My Vote Private?

Yes, your vote is private.



When Is Election Day?

Election Day is Tuesday, November 5, 2013.



Why Vote



Who Can Vote?

You must first register to vote. You can register to vote in Maine if:

- You are age 17 or older. (You have to be 18 by Election Day to vote.)
- You are a citizen of the United States.
- You live in Maine.



How Do I Register To Vote?

- You must fill out a voter registration card. These boxes must be filled out:
 - You are a U.S. citizen
 - You will be 18 years old on or before the Election Day
- You must write your full legal name, home address (not a P.O. Box), date of birth, and signature.
- Some people need to keep their address private for safety. You can keep your address private by contacting the Secretary of State's office at 207-624-7650.
- When you register for the first time, bring an I.D. and a utility bill that shows your name and address.





Registering to Vote



When Can I Register To Vote?

You can register to vote anytime, even on Election Day.



Where Do I Register To Vote?

You can register to vote:

- By mail. It needs to be received by your City Clerk by Tuesday, October 15, 2013.
- In person at your town office or city hall during regular business hours, even on Election Day.
- At any Bureau of Motor Vehicle by October 8, 2013.
- At voting places.

To register to vote, you need to prove who you are and where you live.

- Bring identification and a bill with your address.
(example: driver's license and electric bill)



What Is A Political Party?

- A political party is a group of people who share the same ideas about how the government should work.
- When you register to vote, you can join a political party if you want. It is free. You can also change your party registration.
- Examples of political parties include: Democratic, Maine Green Independent, and Republican.
- You do not have to join a party to vote, which is unenrolled on the registration card.



How Do I Vote?

★ Where Do I Go To Vote?



- Every town and city has its own place where people can vote. These are called voting places, polls, or polling places.
- Call your town office or city hall to find out where you should go.
- Voting places open between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. The opening time is not the same for all towns and cities.
- **All voting places close at 8:00 p.m.**

★ What Will I Do At The Voting Place?

- When you get to your voting place, you will need to tell the election clerk your name and maybe your address. Your name will be on a list if you are registered to vote.
- The election clerk will give you a ballot.
- You will go into a private voting booth and complete your ballot.
- You will put the ballot in the ballot box or a machine.

★ Do I Need An I.D.(Identification Card)?

- If you are a first-time voter, or you have moved, you should bring your I.D. and proof of your address.
(example: driver's license and electric bill)
- Don't worry. No eligible voter can be turned away.



How Do I Fill Out The Ballot?



- A ballot is the piece of paper where you mark your vote.
- Different towns and cities use different types of ballots.
- Each ballot tells you how to mark your choices.
- If you have a question, ask an election clerk.
- Check your ballot.
- You do not have to vote on everything. Only the parts you vote on will count.
- If you make a mistake, you can ask for a new ballot.



What If I Can't Read The Ballot?

- You can get help.
- A friend or a relative can help you. Your helper does not have to be a voter or be old enough to vote.
- You can use the **Accessible Voting System (AVS)** which is voting by phone.
- An election worker can help you with your ballot.
- Your employer or union official cannot help you vote.



How Do I Vote By AVS?

- Go to the voting place and tell the election clerk you want to use AVS- Accessible Voting System or vote by phone.
- The election clerk will set up an AVS phone for you to use. You will hear the voting questions. Vote yes or no by pressing keys on the phone or by pressing a large yellow button.
- A printed copy of your completed ballot will be faxed to you at the AVS phone.
- You put your ballot in the ballot box or machine.



Voting: In-Person or Absentee

★ Do I Have To Go To The Voting Place On Election Day To Vote?



- No. If you are registered to vote, you can ask for an absentee ballot. You must do so **by October 31, 2013**.
- If you ask for an absentee ballot **after October 31st**, you must complete an application. You must give a reason you cannot go to your polling place on Election Day. These are the only reasons that you can choose:
 1. You will be out of town all day on Election Day.
 2. You are ill or disabled and cannot leave home.
 3. You live on an island and cannot get transportation on Election Day.

★ What Is Absentee Voting?

Absentee voting lets you vote at home and mail your absentee ballot to your town clerk, or you can complete an absentee ballot in person at your town office or city hall. The town or city clerk must receive absentee ballots by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day for your vote to count.

★ How Do I Get An Absentee Ballot?

- Ask for an absentee ballot from your town/city hall.
- Request an absentee ballot online from the Division of Elections at <http://www.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl>
- You can also ask for an absentee ballot for an immediate family member.
- The town/city clerk's office will tell you who is considered an immediate family member.



Voting: In-Person or Absentee



What Do I Do With My Absentee Ballot?

- Fill out the ballot. Remember, you don't have to vote for every question, it is okay to leave questions blank.
- Mail or deliver your ballot to your town/city clerk's office. **It must be received before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.**



How Do I Find And Contact My Town Or City Clerk?

You can find the address and phone number for your town/city clerk at:

www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/munic.htm



You Can Also Contact:

Office of the Secretary of State

Division of Elections

101 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0101

T. 207-624-7650

Email: cec.elections@maine.gov

Website: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/





Things To Remember



Is There A Way To See The Ballot Before The Election?

You can print it from the website:

http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/lookup_voter_info



What If My Name Is Not On The List At The Voting Place?

- The election clerk will help you. You may be sent to a different voting place.
- You may need to register to vote.



What If I Need Help At The Voting Place?

Ask an election clerk for help if you have any questions. Election clerks can help you fill out a ballot and give you a new one if you need it. They can also help you use AVS. You will not be the only one with questions!



How Can I Avoid The Crowds?

- Go to the voting place when it tends to be less crowded:
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Or, you can vote at home with an absentee ballot. Just be sure your absentee ballot **is received by your town office or city hall before 8:00 p.m. on November 5, 2013.**



What Do I Vote On In A Referendum Election?

In this election, you will vote YES or NO to questions about whether Maine government should borrow money.



Bonds In Referendum Election



What Is A Bond?

- The State of Maine borrows money by issuing bonds.
- The State pays interest on the amount it borrows.
- The people must vote to approve the bonds issued by the State of Maine.
- If the voters approve the bond, the Treasurer borrows money to fund the bond projects.
- The State pays back the amount it borrowed plus interest within a fixed time period.



How Does A Bond Work?

As a citizen, you get to choose what projects the state will fund by voting for or against a bond issue.



How Does Passing These Bonds Impact The State Of Maine?

- The state's total budget for next year is nearly \$4 billion.
- The total increase in Maine's debt if all the bond issues pass would be \$204 million. The State of Maine owes \$400 million in outstanding debt now.
- The money to repay the bonds every year comes out of the state's general fund and/or highway fund. These payments must be made. This decreases the money that the Maine Legislature has to allocate for other projects.



For More Maine Bond Details

Click on the Citizen's Guide at:

www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming.html

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BALLOT QUESTION 1: Bond Issue

Do you favor a \$14,000,000 bond issue to provide funds for the State's share of maintenance, repair, capital improvement, modernization and energy efficiency projects for Maine Army National Guard readiness centers and support facilities and the purchase of land for training and to draw down federal matching funds?

What this question means:

The state would borrow \$14 million to repair and maintain facilities at Maine Army National Guard readiness centers and to purchase land for training. These funds will be matched by federal funds.



Argument for **YES**:

- The bond will provide money to the Maine Army National Guard for facility improvements.
- Use of the bond funds could result in jobs and may help the economy in the State of Maine.
- Upgrading the National Guard facilities could improve training of the Maine National Guard.
- Maintenance at the aging facilities has been put off for a long time.
- Interest rates are at an historic low, borrowing money now costs less.
- The bond will be matched by federal funds up to \$14 million.



Argument for **NO**:

- Maine would add \$14 million to its total debt.
- It will cost a total of \$16.8 million in principal and interest over ten years to repay the money.
- Other projects may be more worthy of the state's money.

2

BALLOT QUESTION 2: Bond Issue

Do you favor a \$15,500,000 bond issue to enhance educational and employment opportunities for Maine citizens and students by updating and improving existing laboratory and classroom facilities of the University of Maine System statewide?

What this question means:

The state would borrow \$15.5 million to improve classrooms and educational facilities at the University of Maine System.



Argument for **YES**:

- The bond will provide money to update and improve labs and classrooms. This may improve the quality of education in the University of Maine system.
- Improving educational facilities could help create a more qualified workforce and more future jobs for the State of Maine.
- Use of the bond funds could result in construction jobs right away.
- Interest rates are at an historic low, borrowing money now costs less.
- Upgrading the aging facilities in the University of Maine system has been put off for a long time.



Argument for **NO**:

- Maine would add \$15.5 million to its total debt.
- It will cost a total of \$18.7 million in principal and interest over ten years to repay the money.
- Other projects may be more worthy of the state's money.

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BALLOT QUESTION 3: Bond Issue

Do you favor a \$100,000,000 bond issue for reconstruction and rehabilitation of highways and bridges and for facilities or equipment related to ports, harbors, marine transportation, freight and passenger railroads, aviation and transit, to be used to match an estimated \$154,000,000 in federal and other funds?

What this question means:

The state would borrow \$100 million to improve and repair highways, bridges, harbors, ports, railroads, airports, and boat transportation. Maine would pay \$100 million. An additional \$154 million would come from the federal government and other sources.

 **Argument for YES:**

- The bond will provide money to improve highways and bridges as well as facilities to support all existing modes of transportation in Maine.
- It will make our roads and bridges safer.
- Improvements in transportation systems support commerce and tourism for the future.
- Interest rates are at an historic low, borrowing money now costs less.
- Use of the bond funds could result in construction jobs right now.
- Maine's share of the cost of these projects is \$100 million. Our share will be matched by \$154 million in federal and other funds.

 **Argument for NO:**

- Maine would add \$100 million to its debt.
- It will cost a total of \$121.7 million in principal and interest over ten years to repay the money.
- Other projects may be more worthy of the state's money.

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BALLOT QUESTION 4: Bond Issue

Do you favor a \$4,500,000 bond issue to provide funds for a public-private partnership for a building project for a new science facility at the Maine Maritime Academy to be matched by other funds?

What this question means:

The state would borrow \$4.5 million to help Maine Maritime Academy build a new science facility. Maine would pay \$4.5 million. Private donors would pay \$9.6 million



Argument for **YES**:

- Jobs will be created in the construction project.
- The new facility may help improve training in the sciences for students at the Maine Maritime Academy.
- Interest rates are at an historic low, borrowing money now costs less.
- The \$4.5 million bond will be matched by \$9.6 million in other funds.
- Money is needed from the State of Maine to get the rest of the private money needed to complete the project.



Argument for **NO**:

- Maine would add \$4.5 million to its debt.
- It will cost a total of \$5.4 million in principal and interest over ten years to repay the money.
- Other projects may be more worthy of the state's money.

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BALLOT QUESTION 5: Bond Issue

Do you favor a \$15,500,000 bond issue to upgrade buildings, classrooms and laboratories on the 7 campuses of the Maine Community College System in order to increase capacity to serve more students through expanded programs in health care, precision machining, information technology, criminal justice and other key programs?

What this question means:

The state would borrow \$15.5 million to help Maine Community College System upgrade buildings and classrooms. The new buildings would help serve more students in certain key programs.



Argument for **YES**:

- The bond will help the Maine Community College System serve more students in key programs. More students will be better trained to help fill future jobs statewide.
- Some of the buildings will have improved energy efficiency.
- Interest rates are at an historic low, borrowing money now costs less.
- Use of the bond funds could result in construction jobs right away.
- Upgrading of aging facilities in the Maine Community College System has been put off for a long time.



Argument for **NO**:

- Maine would add \$15.5 million to its debt.
- It will cost a total of \$18.7 million in principal and interest over ten years to repay the money.
- Other projects may be more worthy of the state's money.



Thank You

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The League of Women Voters of Maine is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.

League of Women Voters of Maine Education Fund is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, public-policy educational organization. It builds citizen participation in the democratic process, studies key community issues at all government levels in an unbiased manner, and enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management

Join the League of Women Voters of Maine!

Since women gained the right to vote in 1920, we have educated voters to register and vote. We invite you to become a part of this organization, which is rich in history and accomplishments.

The League of Women Voters of Maine is one of the most respected groups directly involved in keeping citizens engaged in local, state, and national government.

Join online at www.lwvme.org/join.html. Or mail your contact information and a check for \$55 for one membership, or \$82.50 for two members at the same household to: League of Women Voters of Maine, PO Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863.