

**Maine  
Referendum  
Election:  
November 3,  
2009**

# EASY-TO-READ VOTER GUIDE



Literacy  
Volunteers  
of Maine



League of  
Women Voters  
of Maine

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**E**xercise your rights and vote! Inside this *Easy-to-Read Voter Guide*, you'll learn about voting, Maine ballot questions and more!



**Learn - Register - Vote!**



## About This Guide

**Literacy Volunteers of Maine** and the **League of Women Voters of Maine** made this *Easy-to-Read Voter Guide* in 2009. We printed and gave away 10,000 copies in Maine.

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

The questions you will vote on in this year's election are written in the *Guide* just as you will read them on your ballot. The League of Women Voters of Maine wrote the descriptions of the ballot issues.

We have tried our best to make the Guide accurate. To comment on the *Easy-to-Read Voter Guide*, please e-mail: [info@lvmaine.org](mailto:info@lvmaine.org) or call 1-800-322-5455.



## Copies Of This Guide

We may have extra copies of the *Guide*. Call 1-800-322-5455 to ask for copies. The text is online at [www.lvmaine.org](http://www.lvmaine.org) and at [www.lwvme.org](http://www.lwvme.org).

To hear someone read the *Easy-to-Read Voter Guide*, you can download it to your computer from [www.theiris.org/Airs/MaineAirs/htm](http://www.theiris.org/Airs/MaineAirs/htm). You can ask for a CD by calling 1-800-322-5455.





## 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 these kinds of questions:

- Citizen Initiative
- Bond Issue
- Constitutional

We have listed these questions exactly how you will see them on your ballot. Read page 10 to learn more about Referendum Elections. The ballot questions are explained on pages 11-18.

In some cities and towns, you may also be asked to vote on candidates for local offices or to vote on local issues.



### Is My Vote Private?

Yes, your vote is private.



### When Is Election Day?

Election Day is **Tuesday, November 3, 2009.**



## Registering To Vote In Maine



### 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. or a utility bill that shows your name and address.



 **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. For the 2009 election, the cut-off date is October 13, 2009.
- In person at your town office or city hall anytime, even on Election Day.
- At any Motor Vehicle branch office.
- At voting places. Check to make sure registration cards are available.

Bring an I.D. and proof of where you live.

 **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: Democrat, Maine Green Independent, and Republican.
- You do not have to join a party to vote.



## 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. (See page 9 for more information.)
- Voting places open between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. 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. Your name will be on a list.
- 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.



### Do I Need An I.D.?

- If you are a first-time voter, or you have moved, you should bring your I.D. and proof of your address.
- Don't worry. Anyone who is eligible to vote cannot 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.
- An election worker can help you with your ballot.
- Your employer or union official **cannot** help you vote.





## Other Ways To Vote: At The Voting Place Or Absentee



### Is There Another Way To Vote At The Voting Place?

- Yes. **Accessible Voting System (AVS)** lets you vote by phone at the voting place.
- Go to the voting place and tell the election clerk you want to use AVS.
- 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.
- A printed copy of your completed ballot will be faxed to you.
- You put your ballot in the ballot box.



### 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 do not have to give a reason for voting with an absentee ballot.



### What Is Absentee Voting?

Absentee voting lets you fill out a ballot without going to a voting place on Election Day. This means you can 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 from the Division of Elections.
- 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.



## What Do I Do With My Absentee Ballot?

- Fill out the ballot. Remember, you don't have to answer every question.
- Mail or deliver your ballot to your town/city clerk's office 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](http://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

207-624-7650

Email: [cec.elections@maine.gov](mailto:cec.elections@maine.gov)

Website: [www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/](http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/)



## Things To Remember When You Vote



### 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. (See page 5 for more information.)



### 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 is 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 sent to your town office or city hall before 8:00 p.m. on November 3, 2009.



### What Do I Vote On In A Referendum Election?

In this referendum election, you will vote **YES** or **NO** to questions about:

- Changes to Maine laws
- The creation of new Maine laws
- The way Maine government spends money
- Changes to the Maine Constitution

Your vote helps to determine how our state is run.



## Ballot Question 1: People's Veto

**Do you want to reject the new law that lets same-sex couples marry and allows individuals and religious groups to refuse to perform these marriages?**

### What is the Issue?


Should same-sex couples be allowed to marry?

#### Argument for **YES**:

- Marriage has traditionally been between one man and one woman.
- The government should not change an important tradition like marriage.

#### Argument for **NO**:

- The new law allows all couples to marry. It makes sure that all couples are treated equally.
- Same-sex couples will be able to have the legal protection of marriage.
- Churches and religious organizations do not have to perform same-sex marriages.

**VOTE**  




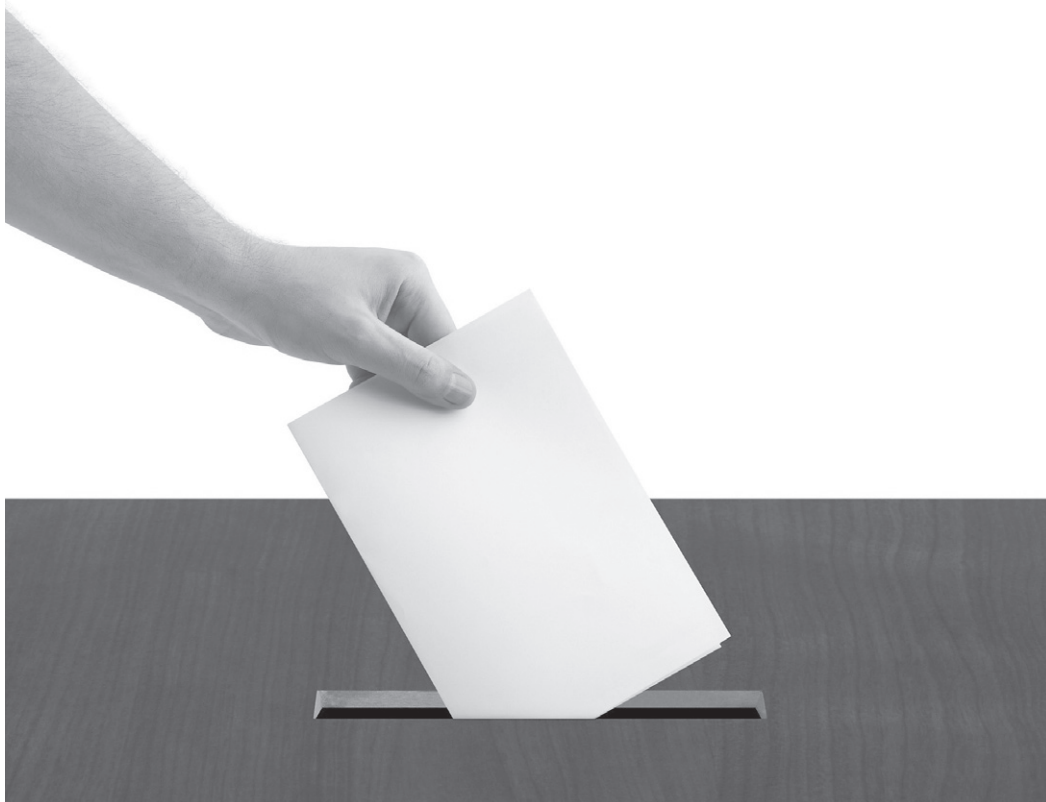
## Ballot Question 2: Citizen Initiative

**Do you want to cut the rate of the municipal excise tax by an average of 55% on motor vehicles less than six years old and exempt hybrid and other alternative-energy and highly fuel-efficient motor vehicles from sales tax and three years of excise tax?**

### What is the Initiative?

This bill lowers the excise tax on motor vehicles that are less than 6 years old. It ends the excise tax on hybrid vehicles and other vehicles that use alternative-energy for three years.

This bill also ends the sales tax on new hybrid vehicles and other vehicles that use alternative-energy.



 Argument for **YES**:

- Some people would pay lower taxes.
- People would be more likely to buy newer vehicles, hybrid vehicles and alternative-energy vehicles.
- Newer cars, hybrid vehicles and alternative-energy vehicles are better for the environment.

 Argument for **NO**:

- There will be less money for towns and cities. This may mean higher property taxes.
- There will be less bridge and street repairs and less snowplowing.
- There will be less money for the state government. This may mean higher income taxes.
- There will be less money for state programs, and the state is already short of cash.





## Ballot Question 3: Citizen Initiative

Do you want to repeal the 2007 law on school district consolidation and restore the laws previously in effect?

### What is the Initiative?

In 2007, Maine passed a law that merges school districts. This bill cancels that law.

#### Argument for **YES**:

- Communities should be in charge of their school districts.
- Community leaders know the needs of local children.
- Merging school districts could cost towns and cities more money.

#### Argument for **NO**:

- Merging school districts saves the state money.
- Larger school districts have more money. This means children could have more school programs.





## Ballot Question 4: Citizen Initiative

**Do you want to change the existing formulas that limit state and local government spending and require voter approval by referendum for spending over those limits and for increases in state taxes?**

### What Is The Initiative?

This bill limits increases in state and local spending. The spending limits are based on growth in population and inflation. A special referendum vote is needed to spend above those limits. A majority of the Legislature, city or town council or board of selectmen plus a majority of voters need to approve any additional spending.

#### Argument for **YES**:

- State and local government spending is growing too fast. This bill would force state and local government to slow its spending.
- Voters should have more control of state and local government spending.

#### Argument for **NO**:

- Maine people elect officials to make the best possible budget and tax decisions.
- The cost of the referendum vote may cost more than the additional spending.
- This statewide vote may force local governments to comply with this law against the wishes of their own voters.
- This law may make cuts to programs that are important to many Maine people.



## Ballot Question 5: Citizen Initiative

Do you want to change the medical marijuana laws to allow treatment of more medical conditions and to create a regulated system of distribution?

### What is the Initiative?

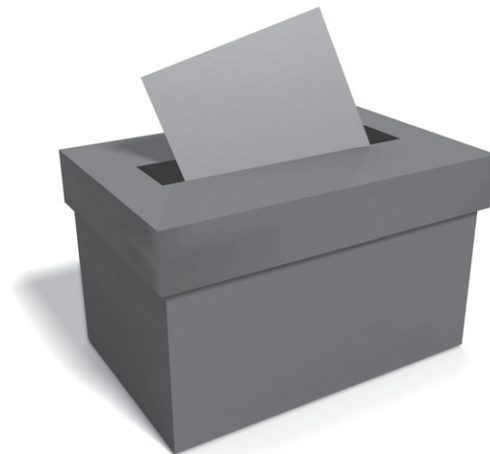
In Maine, it is legal to use marijuana to treat some medical conditions. This law makes it legal to use marijuana to treat more medical conditions. It creates places to give out a safe supply of the drug. It also creates a statewide I.D. card system to protect patients from arrest.

#### ↑ Argument for **YES**:

- More sick people would be able to use marijuana to feel better.
- In Maine, there is no system to sell marijuana. This law makes a system that is controlled by the government.

#### ↓ Argument for **NO**:

- Marijuana is an illegal drug. People who are not sick may get it from people who are sick.
- The government should not sell marijuana.







## Ballot Question 6: Bond Issue

Do you favor a \$71,250,000 bond issue for improvements to highways and bridges, airports, public transit facilities, ferry and port facilities, including port and harbor structures, as well as funds for the LifeFlight Foundation that will make the State eligible for over \$148,000,000 in federal and other matching funds?

### What is the Bond?

It will cost \$219,250,000 to improve Maine's transportation systems. Maine would pay \$71,250,000 and the federal government would pay \$148,000,000.

#### Argument for **YES**:

- The bond will be matched 2 to 1 by federal dollars. This means that for every \$1 Maine pays, the federal government will pay \$2.
- The money will improve Maine's highways, bridges, airports and many public facilities. It will also create jobs.

#### Argument for **NO**:

- The bond will create a lot of new debt that Maine people must repay in the future.



## Ballot Question 7: Constitutional Question

**Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to increase the amount of time that local officials have to certify the signatures on direct initiative petitions?**

### What is the Question?

A city or town clerk now has five days to check the signatures on petitions. These petitions add questions to the ballot. The signatures must belong to registered Maine voters. This change to the Maine Constitution gives city or town clerks 10 days to make sure the signatures belong to registered Maine voters. It also gives petitioners 10 more days to file petitions with the Secretary of State.

#### Argument for **YES**:

- It is important to make sure that signatures belong only to registered Maine voters.
- When there are a lot of petitions, it takes a lot of time to check all of the signatures.

#### Argument for **NO**:

- It is important to have a very good reason to change Maine's Constitution.

## Thank You

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## Literacy Volunteers of Maine

**1-800-322-5455**

**[www.lvmaine.org](http://www.lvmaine.org)**

Literacy Volunteers of Maine is dedicated to providing increased access to literacy services for Maine adults who wish to acquire or improve their literacy skills.

There are 14 offices around the state:

- Androscoggin
- Aroostook County
- Augusta
- Bangor
- Franklin/Somerset
- Mid-Coast (Knox County)
- Moosehead Region
- Greater Portland
- Greater Saco-Biddeford
- Greater Sanford
- Tri-County (Bath/Lincoln/Casco Bay)
- Waldo County-Broadreach
- Waterville
- Washington County

## League of Women Voters of Maine

**207-622-0256**

**[www.lwvme.org](http://www.lwvme.org)**

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.

LWVME is the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement! We have members throughout the state of Maine, with local chapters in the Portland area, in Bath/Brunswick, and in Hancock County.



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