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Legislative Document

No. 451

H.P. 327

House of Representatives, February 16, 2021

An Act To Remove the Party Designation from Return Envelopes for Absentee Ballots for the General Election

Received by the Clerk of the House on February 11, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative RUDNICKI of Fairfield.

Cosponsored by Representatives: ARATA of New Gloucester, CARMICHAEL of Greenbush, DOLLOFF of Milton Township, O'CONNOR of Berwick, PARRY of Arundel, PICKETT of Dixfield, POIRIER of Skowhegan, STANLEY of Medway.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §752, sub-§3**, as repealed and replaced by PL 2001, c. 310,
3 §51, is amended to read:

4 **3. Form of return envelope.** The Secretary of State shall design or approve the form
5 of the absentee ballot return envelope. The Secretary of State may not design or approve a
6 return envelope for use in a general election that includes any mark visible on the outside
7 of the return envelope or a space designated for making a mark visible on the outside of the
8 return envelope that indicates the political party of the voter to whom the absentee ballot is
9 issued.

10 **Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §753-B, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2011, c. 399, §22, is
11 further amended to read:

12 **1. Application or written request received.** Upon receipt of an application or written
13 request for an absentee ballot that is accepted pursuant to section 753-A, the clerk shall
14 immediately issue an absentee ballot and return envelope by mail or in person to the
15 applicant or to the immediate family member or to a 3rd person designated in a written
16 application or request made by the voter, except as provided in subsection 2. The clerk
17 shall type or write in ink the name and the residence address of the voter in the designated
18 section of the return envelope. The clerk may not make any mark visible on the outside of
19 the return envelope that indicates the political party of the voter to whom an absentee ballot
20 is issued for use in a general election.

21 **SUMMARY**

22 This bill prohibits state and local election officials from making any mark indicating
23 the political party of the absentee voter on the outside of an absentee ballot return envelope
24 issued during a general election.