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## **Election Bill Creating Poll Tax, Residency Requirements Passes House Election Law Committee**

***SB179 would penalize New Hampshire voters  
rather than improve elections***

Concord, NH – Today the House Election Law Committee passed an elections bill along party lines (11-8) that creates unnecessary hurdles for New Hampshire voters by instituting an arbitrary vehicle registration “poll tax” and a 30-day residency requirement. The key features of SB 179, which also passed along party lines in the state Senate earlier this month (14-10), are likely unconstitutional at both the state and federal level.

The House Election Law Committee amended SB 179 to require voters to obtain a driver’s license and register their car in New Hampshire – a change that has no clear connection to maintaining the integrity of elections. New Hampshire’s constitution clearly states that “all elections are to be free,” and this amendment acts as a poll tax by charging engaged Granite Staters vehicle registration fees in order to vote.

Furthermore, SB 179 falls short of meeting the standards set in the United States Supreme Court case *Dunn vs. Blumstein*, which permitted up to a 30-day registration requirement in states that need it for administrative purposes. Given that New Hampshire is a same-day registration state, there is no compelling argument that

the state's election administration officials need the additional time.

"The sponsors of this legislation claim these restrictions will somehow stop voter fraud, but the proposed changes would penalize New Hampshire voters rather than help our elections," explained League of Women Voters New Hampshire Election Law Specialist Joan Flood Ashwell. "There are many ways for voters to confirm their identity without forcing them to pay vehicle registration fees, and there are many ways to ensure they live in our state without a 30-day residency requirement. We can't deny eligible voters the right to vote here in New Hampshire."

Despite all evidence to the contrary, politicians continue to push restrictive election laws based on a false narrative of 'phantom' voters. New Hampshire attorney general investigations and a national Washington Post investigation\*\* found that in-person voter impersonation and registration fraud is virtually non-existent.

America Votes-New Hampshire State Director Paula Hodges said, "SB 179 is one of more than a dozen dangerous bills proposed by radical lawmakers that would deter voters and undermine New Hampshire's long-held tradition of streamlining voting. The various proposed bills range from eliminating same-day registration, to creating new inter-state cross-check programs that could purge thousands of eligible voters from the rolls. It's clear these politicians are trying to influence elections by discouraging voters, and that's wrong."

"We urge the governor to veto SB 179 should it pass both chambers this year," Hodges added.

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\*\*A comprehensive investigation of voter impersonation finds 31 credible incidents out of one billion ballots cast, Washington Post Wonk Blog, August 6, 2014: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/08/06/a-comprehensive-investigation-of-voter-impersonation-finds-31-credible-incidents-out-of-one-billion-ballots-cast/>