



**League of Women Voters
New Hampshire**

April 4, 2016

Rep. Kathleen Hoelzel, Chair
House Election Law Committee

Re: SB 509-FN, AN ACT relative to voter registration forms and relative to voter identity verification

Dear Chairman Hoelzel and members of the committee,

Since its founding more than 90 years ago, the League of Women Voters has worked to see that the Constitution's guarantee of the right to vote is a reality for all of our citizens. We have promoted laws that would make voting more accessible and spoken against laws that create unnecessary barriers that discourage or even prevent qualified citizens from being able to register to vote or cast a ballot.

The League opposes SB 509-FN and urges the committee to vote this bill "*Inexpedient to Legislate.*"

Senate Bill 509 makes the voter registration form more confusing for both voters and for election workers. It seems to ask for new information but, in fact, it asks the voter and the election official to duplicate information that is already on the standard voter registration form.

The League believes Online Voter Registration would make it unnecessary for someone who is already registered to vote in NH to have to go through the entire registration process again just to change an in-state address or a name. As far as a change of address in a town or ward, ballot clerks make that change on election day.

The most serious problem with SB 509 though, is that it gives the Secretary of State, Town Clerks and Supervisors of the Checklist power to conduct criminal investigations. The League does not believe the Secretary of State or town elections officials are properly qualified to take over the duties of our law enforcement agencies. The voters who are subject to their investigations have legal and constitutional rights which must be protected. If a local election official failed to protect the rights of a voter under investigation, that town official would be subject to legal action.

Voters who don't have current drivers' licenses or similar documents can sign an affidavit - a legal document - and swear they are qualified to vote. This Legislature seems to assume that anyone without a driver's license is a criminal and needs to be investigated. After more than 4,000 investigations since the 2012 election, there is no evidence to support the need for these investigations. If this legislature wants to continue wasting taxpayers' money this way, they will have to continue the process with the proper investigating agency which is the Attorney General's office.

The League of Women Voters recommends the committee vote *Inexpedient to Legislate* on SB 509.

Thank you,
Liz, Tentarelli, President
Joan Flood Ashwell, Election Law Specialist
League of Women Voters NH