



**League of Women Voters
New Hampshire**

February 4, 2015

Rep. Kathleen Hoelzel, Chair
House Election Law Committee
Re: HB 627-FN, An act relative to registering to vote.

Dear Chairman Hoelzel and members of the committee:

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works on local, state and national levels to encourage citizens to take an interest in politics and to vote. After study by its members, the League advocates for legislation and public policies that serve the public interest.

We have a special interest in legislation that affects the right to vote. Until the 1990s, states, and even localities, had totally different standards for registering to vote. In many cases, the standards were carefully contrived to prevent large segments of the population from being able to exercise their Constitutional right to vote.

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) was passed to try to ensure that every citizen who is at least 18 years old, can vote in every election. The principal reform of the act was to create a standard voter registration form to be used by everyone registering to vote. The bill also eliminated excessive lengths of time people had to live in a place before registering to vote, and it required every state to create a centralized voter database to ensure better recordkeeping.

Since the passage of the NVRA, many states have used their databases to make registering to vote easier and more secure. Many states are instituting online voter registration and mail in voting. Online voting is being studied by a number of states. Another major reform being adopted by other states is same-day registration like New Hampshire and several other states have had for decades.

HB 627-FN references the NVRA but misses the whole point of the federal law. While other states are moving forward addressing the needs of our 21st Century society, HB 627 seems to be trying to replicate the past.

HB 627-FN is a mishmash of selected bits and pieces of the federal legislation in a bill that not only misses the whole point of the NVRA but violates many of the key provisions of the federal law. It also calls for provisional ballots which violates the NH Constitution.

Instead of trying to make voting more complicated and unreachable for our citizens, this legislature should be looking at ways to institute online voter registration and other reforms that recognize voters' needs for election procedures that fit with this century's society.

The League of Women Voters NH urges the House Election Law Committee to ITL HB 627-FN.

Thank you,

Liz Tentarelli, co-president
Sally Davis, co-president
Joan Flood Ashwell, election law specialist

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