



**League of Women Voters
New Hampshire**

January 26, 2016

Rep. Kathleen Hoelzel, Chairman

House Election Law Committee

Re: HB 1642-FN-LOCAL, AN ACT relative to persons executing election affidavits

Dear Chairman Hoelzel and members of the committee,

The League of Women Voters was founded more than 90 years ago by women who fought for decades to secure the vote for women. The League is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to encouraging citizens to take part in government affairs through voting.

The League of Women Voters urges the House Election Law Committee to vote *Inexpedient to Legislate* on HB 1642.

This bill only applies to those who register on election day and who sign a notarized election affidavit as proof of their qualification to vote. Those voters would then be required to return within 10 days of the election with additional proof of identity, citizenship, age and domicile. Those who register at any time other than election day, would not need to provide additional documents beyond a signed and notarized affidavit.

The League believes requiring more documentation for same-day registrants than from other registrants violates Article 11 of the NH Constitution, "All elections are to be free, and every inhabitant of the state of 18 years of age and upwards shall have an equal right to vote in any election."

The League also believes that HB 1642 could very well impose a poll tax on some voters and not on others. Those who sign a notarized affidavit in place of certain documents are directed to obtain other documentation. Driver's licenses, birth certificates and passports all would place a significant financial burden on many voters. While a voter is allowed to obtain a voter's ID receipt from the Town or City Clerk, taking several hours or a day from work to get a voter's ID from the DMV can be very costly for an hourly worker. Many parts of the state are served by DMV offices which are only open once a week or once a month. It may be impossible, even if a non-driver could get to a DMV office, to be able to do so within a 10-day timeline.

Documentation of an address without a current driver's license may be impossible. With the advent of internet banking and bill paying, and the government's move online for taxes, social security, and other financial transactions, increasing numbers of people simply don't get any mail.

The League of Women Voters also objects to the threatening language that has been added to the same-day registration form. We can think of no reason to threaten someone with an investigation by the Attorney General except as an attempt to intimidate a citizen who may – for very good reasons – not have certain specific kinds of documents. The sentence is clearly meant to make a person believe that it is illegal not to have a driver’s license or a similar document. That is not the case, and the Legislature should not present it a reason to remove someone from the active voter checklist.

The House Election Law Committee should vote HB 1642-FN-LOCAL, *Inexpedient to Legislate*.

Thank you,

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