



**League of Women Voters
New Hampshire**

January 27, 2016

Senator Regina Birdsell, Chair
Public and Municipal Affairs Committee
Re: SB 507-FN, AN ACT authorizing online voter registration

Dear Senator Birdsell 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 supports SB 507-FN to authorize online voter registration. We urge the Public and Municipal Affairs Committee to recommend *Ought to Pass* on this bill.

More than 30 states now have online voter registration, and a survey of 70 election officials across the country interviewed by the Brennan Center for Justice in the past two years shows the benefits of a modernized voting system. (<https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/voter-registration-digital-age-2015-update>)

Online voter registration increases voter roll accuracy because supervisors of the checklist no longer have to try to interpret illegible handwriting or manually enter voter information which can cause errors on the voter lists. Letting people register online has also greatly reduced workloads and administrative burdens for our mostly-volunteer election workers. It will also save time for voters who move from one polling place to another in the state. Currently, they must reregister even though they've already been approved as voters in New Hampshire. That would no longer be necessary because their address could simply be changed from one town to another.

Online voter registration encourages people to register and vote. In 11 of the 14 states that had online voter registration in 2012, online registrations accounted for more than 10 percent of all new sign-ups between 2010 and 2012. Studies of individual states since 2012 have shown even higher percentages of growth.

The League was surprised to see some of the costs projected by the Secretary of State's office for implementing online voter registration because they are not borne out in other states. There are a number of detailed studies available. Here is what the Brennan Center found in its 2015 report:

These cost savings are especially exciting because most states have been able to implement online registration with only a modest investment. We were only able to collect estimates from 18 states, but nearly all — 14 — reported that they were able to implement online registration for less than \$300,000. Start-up costs ranged from as low as \$0 in Kansas and Missouri, to a budgeted \$1.8 million in California.

The League of Women Voters has, for years, been urging the New Hampshire Legislature to join the rest of the country in making voter registration and voting more accessible to all qualified citizens by modernizing the state's procedures. Online Voter Registration is a tested and very successful way to begin the process.

We recommend the committee vote *Ought to Pass* on SB 507.

Thank you,

Liz Tentarelli, president
Joan Flood Ashwell, election law specialist
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www.LWVNH.org