



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
NEW HAMPSHIRE

www.LWVNH.org

4 Park St Room 200
Concord, NH 03301

Feb 7, 2017

To Chair and members of the House Election Law Committee:

Re: HB 372, an act relative to the terms “resident” “inhabitant” “residency” etc.

The League of Women Voters NH is a nonpartisan organization that never supports or opposes candidates or political parties but does take stands on issues after study and agreement by members. Voting rights and good government are two of our core issues.

I speak today as a resident of Newbury NH as well as the president of the League of Women Voters. Until 19 years ago I lived in Massachusetts, and from 1969 to 1982 I was a resident of Atkinson NH. I move infrequently, but I am unusual statistically. Some people move every year or two, for job or family reasons. Some people have periods in their lives when they surf from one place to another because they can't afford housing. Students have unique situations, as they transition from their parents' homes to establishing their own homes. Military personnel are assigned all over the globe, for varying lengths of time. Graduate students and doctors and nurses go where training and career opportunities open up, then move on to other places to further their skills. I know that my domicile and residence have been the same place for 19 years, that I am an inhabitant of Newbury. But that confluence of terms in my case does not confer upon me greater voting rights than others in different circumstances.

We ask the committee to consider seriously the impact on potential voters, particularly those in more fluid life circumstances than you or I, if the terms in this bill and other RSAs are to become equivalents.

I did a search of the RSAs using keywords. Over 500 items came up for “resident.” Sixty-two RSAs came up for “Inhabitant” covering everything from taxes to LLCs to probate. For “domicile” I found 197 RSAs using that term, many applied to voting but also to school attendance and other issues.

If the intent of this bill is, like other bills this session, to limit the voting rights of people who don't fit the life pattern you and I happen to have, it's just plain mean. But more to the point it conflates terms with varying connotations that have been used in our statutes for decades and have been so adopted by our Legislature for good reasons.

The League of Women Voters NH opposes HB 372 and we urge the House Election Law Committee to vote *Inexpedient to Legislate* on H37552.

Respectfully submitted by

Liz Tentarelli, president League of Women Voters NH
(contact: home phone 763-9296 email: LWV@kenliz.net)