



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 588, creating a provisional ballot

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.

The League has serious concerns about **HB 588 because it changes the entire way we run elections in NH. Same day voter registration has always carried with it the assurance that all votes cast would be counted. Our First in the Nation Primary garners national attention in part because accurate counts are reported within hours of polls closing. Provisional ballots would change that.**

On the personal side, consider how many times you have had to take one extra step after purchasing a product, for example, to get your rebate. Did you mail in your rebate slip with proofs of purchase, or did they get shoved in your pocket and forgotten in the rush of daily life? How often have things slipped from your to-do list and only later do you realize it's too late to do something? For some voters, who go to the polls assuming—from years of voting experience—that photo ID is not absolutely required, will their anger at being asked to return within days keep them voting for years in the future? We don't know, but we can assume that jumping through hoops is not a good part of the voting experience.

For the many elderly and disabled and young voters without drivers licenses, being asked to return with one is an insult. If they don't drive or get around easily, getting to the DMV for a non-voter ID in a matter of days is unrealistic. Those provisional ballots will go uncounted.

Voting is a right, and in NH we have made it possible for those without ID to exercise that right. We have not experienced widespread voter impersonation as a result. Our voter turnout in November was 78%, third highest in the nation. If voters in future think their ballot may be laid aside, will they be as likely to come out?

This bill is a solution looking for a problem that's not there, and in turn it creates the problems of frustration and delayed vote counts.

The League of Women Voters NH opposes HB 588 and we urge the House Election Law Committee to vote *Inexpedient to Legislate* on HB 588.

Respectfully submitted by

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