

1297 Route 103
Newbury New Hampshire 03255
March 7, 2017

Re SB 3 – relative to domicile for voting purposes and its proposed amendment

To Chair Senator Regina Birdsall and members of the Senate Election Law Committee

Like you, election officials – moderators, town clerks, supervisors of the checklist, and members of Selectboards – are elected not by parties but by the voters of New Hampshire. Newbury election officials come from both parties and cover the spectrum from conservative through liberal. We are the officials in the trenches, the ones assuring that (as the New Hampshire Constitution promises) “every inhabitant of the state of 18 years of age and upwards shall have an equal right to vote in any election.” No Newbury election official contacted about how they view SB 3 supports it.

Supervisor of the Checklist comments include: “... we have no interest in creating additional paperwork ... One form is sufficient for all time, but it would be nice if they would add information to it that we really need ... a voter when registering and signing the registration form has already sworn that the information on the form is correct.”

Our Selectboard voted that “the Board of Selectmen register their desire to see this [SB 3] refused by the State.”

As Town Moderator, my underlying concern is the equal treatment of every qualified voter. SB 3 in several ways treats voters who have resided in a town for 30 or fewer days and voters who choose to register on election day much more stringently than others. Small as we are, Newbury had a voter of less than 30 days who had sold her home in a nearby city and purchased in Newbury. There is no reason she should be singled out and ordered to do extra paperwork or be verified by local law enforcement. We had a respected town resident whose house sold quicker than she expected; we could not allow her to vote in Newbury as she was no longer a resident. There is no reason her same day registration in a neighboring town (where she was residing with her son until she chose a new residence) should require additional paperwork or verification by local law enforcement. Such voters have done nothing wrong. Their registration process should be no different from that of all other voters.

Your hasty amendment targets voters who change residence or choose to legally register on election day. Those voters deserve to be treated equally to every other voter who has “an equal right to vote in any election.”

Newbury election officials urge you to vote Inexpedient to Legislate on SB 3. I also urge you to consult with New Hampshire election officials, the witnesses of voters on election day. (Clerks have an annual spring meeting, moderators have an annual workshop before town meeting time, and all officials could be surveyed.) Instead of being guided “along party lines” be guided by election officials and the voters we all represent.

Nancy Marashio, Moderator
Town of Newbury