



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
NEW HAMPSHIRE

www.LWVNH.org

4 Park St. Room 200
Concord, NH 03301

April 2017

To Rep. Griffith, Chair and members of the House Election Law Committee

Re: SB 113, authorizing cities and towns to use an electronic poll book as a trial program

The League of Women Voters NH is a nonpartisan organization that encourages citizens to take an interest in politics and to vote. We support efforts to make voting easier and simpler as a way of encouraging greater voter participation. **The League of Women Voters NH urges the committee to recommend *Ought to Pass* on SB113.**

The League supports this exciting initiative to try a modern, efficient and more secure method of registering and checking in voters at the polling place. The demonstrations of the system that were held in 2016 were enthusiastically received by election officials from across the state. The Secretary of State has been given the power in this bill to certify which poll book vendors should be used. The bill also includes an evaluation of the systems a month after their use, leading to further improvements in the future. The Secretary of State's recent authorization of the town of Bedford to use electronic poll books in the March 14 municipal election is also an indication that it is time to consider this method.

We urge the Legislature to modernize election procedures and make voting more efficient. This trial program of electronic poll books is an opportunity to begin the process.

The League of Women Voters NH urges the committee to recommend *Ought to Pass* on SB113.

Respectfully submitted,

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Addendum: Feb. 9, 2017 Union Leader article re Bedford's use of electronic poll books:

New electronic poll books to be piloted in Bedford

By KIMBERLY HOUGHTON Union Leader Correspondent

BEDFORD — Bedford will be the first municipality in the state to pilot an electronic poll book during the March election, which could potentially become the norm if supported by legislators.

“Bedford is on the cutting edge of some really cool technology,” said Lori Radke, town clerk, who is eager to try the electronic poll book developed by KNOWiNK, an iPad-based technology for electronic voter registration and voter check-in.

The goal of the new system is to reduce wait times for voters as they enter the polls, and to streamline

the process used afterward to calculate how many voters hit the polls and cast ballots.

“This will eliminate the need to have ballot clerks searching through names in a large book,” Radke said of the electronic poll book system that is already being utilized by 32 other states throughout the nation.

Last spring, legislation was considered to implement the technology statewide, but there were some concerns about the process. Instead, the Secretary of State’s office formed a committee to study the concept, and has agreed to allow Radke to try the new product on March 14 in Bedford, which will be used in addition to the traditional check-in system to determine its effectiveness.

“I know it might be a little bit inconvenient, and I am taking a huge risk, but I hope the people in town will understand that we are paving the way for the future,” she said.

There are some technical challenges associated with the program, but Radke is optimistic that it will be successful and be considered for use by cities throughout the state this fall.

According to Radke, electronic poll books allow polling locations to put the entire checklist on an electronic device platform, thereby eliminating the use of alphabetical lines and ultimately reducing voter wait times.

“In addition, the use of electronic poll-books would eliminate the need to count checklists at the end of the night, and they would allow election officials to see turnout numbers immediately. And, maybe most importantly, for supervisors of the checklist, the data entry and checklist scanning can be done in real time — not over the two months following an election,” Radke wrote in a staff report to the Bedford Town Council.

LHS Associates Inc., the same company Bedford currently uses to service its AccuVote ballot counting machines, has partnered with KNOWiNK of St. Louis, Mo., to offer the technology locally.

The program will also enable voters to register at the polls quickly and easily, according Radke. Voters will still be required to show their driver’s license, which will then be scanned into the electronic device to guarantee identification.

For larger cities, the process is expected to save election costs and time with accurate data and consolidation of precincts.

“It will also eliminate human error,” said Radke. “Currently, we never get an accurate count of how many people show up. These machines will eliminate that completely.”

If the pilot is successful next month, Sen. Bette Lasky has already introduced legislation that will allow electronic poll books to be implemented this fall at city polling stations throughout the state; voters will still be using paper ballots to cast their votes.