



4 Park St. Room 200  
Concord, NH 03301

[www.LWVNH.org](http://www.LWVNH.org)

Jan. 19, 2022

To House Election Law Chair Barbara Griffin and the Committee

From Liz Tentarelli, president, League of Women Voters NH  
contact email: [LWVnewhampshire@gmail.com](mailto:LWVnewhampshire@gmail.com)

**HB1542** is another attempt to make voting procedures more complicated in order to discourage people from voting. We must not let the innocuous “show certain documentation” in the title lull us into thinking this bill won’t change things much. It will create provisional ballots. Voters don’t like provisional ballots. The election results are delayed. Already overworked town clerks will have additional chores. Please recommend HB1542 Inexpedient To Legislate.

In 2017, the legislature passed SB3, which was ultimately declared unconstitutional by the courts, at a cost to the state of millions of dollars and hundreds of hours of staff time.

Because the ongoing lawsuit stayed the SB3 process, SB3 was operational in only one election. Since then we’ve had multiple local, state, and federal elections.

Without SB3 in effect, voter fraud has not increased. It remains at just a few cases of confused first time voters, a couple of old people also confused about whether they’d also voted absentee, and one case of a stubborn coot who believed that owning homes in two towns entitled him to two votes.

But rampant voter fraud was the threatened outcome if SB3 were not enacted. That assumption has been disproven.

The only reason for changing a process that has been working well, with just a tiny number of non-compliant voters in elections with huge voter turnout, is to suppress the vote. That is what this bill will do in several ways.

The sponsors will argue that we must “restore the public’s faith in our elections.” Giving some ballots bar codes will NOT restore confidence in the election system. Handing a voter a receipt will not restore confidence. Rather it will create doubt about the privacy of the election process.

Like SB3, this bill will create additional paperwork for voters and for town election officials. More paperwork means more time spent with each voter at the polls on election day, amidst noise and confusion.

How many election workers will we lose from the frustration of trying to explain why a voter is getting a bar-coded ballot different from everyone else?

How will a voter respond when the moderator takes that ballot and puts it “in a separate storage location” rather than into the ballot box?

How many voters will declare “Never again!” in frustration?

And what is the voter likely to do who is given a packet of information about what to do to verify his/her ballot? Upon leaving the polling place, I predict most will simply toss the packet in the car or stuff it in a pocket and continue on the day’s errands, and forget entirely that the harried election official prescribed next steps.

On pages 2 and 3 of HB1542, absentee ballots are discussed. No one has reported fraudulently cast absentee ballots since the woman from Manchester who voted her recently deceased husband’s ballot in 2016 (“I knew how he wanted to vote,” she had said, as she explained that she was just honoring her dear departed husband’s wishes.) Why, then, do we suddenly need to complicate the absentee ballot process with requiring ID for in-person return or turn the absentee ballot into a provisional ballot? On page 3, lines 10-14, this bill would create a signature match requirement. As I read it, the bill incorrectly implies that we already do absentee ballot signature matching, a practice that a court ruled against a few years as discriminatory to voters who are disabled or elderly. Does the legislature want to go through that again in courts?

I respectfully ask this committee to save everyone grief by **recommending HB1542 Inexpedient To Legislate**. Voter fraud is extremely rare in New Hampshire, voter turnout is the envy of many other states, and this bill is not needed.