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

April 23, 2024

To: Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

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

Re: HB 1569

As a non-partisan organization whose mission is empowering voters, the League of Women Voters works to explain voter registration and election procedures to the public. Until now we've been able to say, "You have to be 18 or older, a citizen, and live in New Hampshire in order to register and vote."

HB1569 would change that. Instead of "You have to **be** 18 or older, a citizen, and live in NH..." the word **BE** in that sentence and would read "You have to **have paperwork to prove you are** 18..."

Is this really the way we should look at voting? Not that you have to **BE eligible** but that you have to **HAND OVER DOCUMENTATION that you are eligible**.

The sponsor of this bill...and we note there is ONLY ONE SPONSOR...would have it so. But this committee and the Senate need not agree. You can acknowledge that not everyone lives the same kind of organized life you do, that not all people have easy access to their own paperwork, due to life circumstances.

What we have always demanded is that voters **be** 18 or older, a citizen, and live in the town in which they will vote. To change this to a procedure of qualification that we know not every person can meet is voter suppression.

*I'm including in this testimony the story of a longtime NH resident and voter, the husband of a League of Women Voters member.*

**Bob Davies is 90 and lives at Heritage Heights in Concord. Before that he lived in Bow. He votes.** But...he does not have a birth certificate. He was adopted and adoption records in New York state were closed until only a few years ago.

He decided in June 2023 to get a birth certificate. He applied to the New York City Health Dept. and after a few months delay they determined that they could not issue it because the adoption order had an error in his parents' address. He then sent an application to the Surrogates Court in King's County, NY (Brooklyn) to amend the adoption order. This was sent in October 2023. Bob and his wife kept checking and in January officials said they were still looking but records dating back to 1934 were not digitized, necessitating hours of work. Finally, New York officials found the paperwork, and Bob is now waiting for the judge to sign the amended order. The amended order will then have to go back to the Health Dept. so they can issue the birth certificate.

Luckily Bob was not applying out of necessity. Everyone else in his family had a birth certificate; he'd like to have one too, and at 90 years old he decided it was time.

When Bob first registered to vote, many many years ago, not having a birth certificate was not an issue. He gave his date and place of birth and signed the forms. But, had this proposed bill HB1569 been in effect, and if Bob had been living in Massachusetts rather than Bow before moving to Concord, he would not have been able to present the birth certificate needed to register. He would have been qualified but unable to vote.

You'll hear other stories, but you shouldn't have to. You need merely acknowledge that our law now, requiring that voters BE 18, citizens, and residents of NH, has worked well and will continue to serve our elections.

**We don't need HB1569. We don't want to deny the vote to some residents of New Hampshire on a whim. Please vote Inexpedient To Legislate on HB1569.**