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www.LWVNH.org

February 4, 2025

To: House Election Law Committee chair Ross Berry and committee members

From: Liz Tentarelli, president, LWVNH contact: LWVnewhampshire@gmail.com

Re: HB686 and HB608, requiring notarization of absentee ballot applications

In thinking about these bills, I urge the committee to think about someone who needs to vote absentee for health/disability reasons, being out of town, long and sometimes unpredictable work hours, or being at home caring for someone who can't be left alone.

For these people to get paperwork to a notary, during the limited times some notaries are available, can be as hard as getting to the polls.

For people who live in rural areas, this is even more difficult. I was just speaking with a League of Women Voters member from the north country. When I looked up "notaries" online for her town and the nearby larger town, nothing came up.[1] Not all banks have notaries, and those that do don't have them available all the time. Same with post offices and town clerks.

In New Hampshire, it is permissible to charge from \$10 to \$25 for notary services.[2] While some notaries (such as in my former small town of Newbury) did notarization for free, but many others charge. These two bills, requiring notarization, then become a poll tax of sorts imposed on absentee voters. Poll taxes were outlawed in 1964.

On behalf of the League of Women Voters New Hampshire and for the benefit of all voters in New Hampshire, I urge you to **recommend ITL on HB686 and HB608**. You will be recognizing the tradition and value of keeping our state's elections "free and fair."

[1] Bethlehem and Franconia

[2] www.nationalnotary.org