**HB 259 - AS INTRODUCED**

2023 SESSION

23-0269
04/08

HOUSE BILL ***259***

AN ACT relative to a study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility and legal obligation for citizens.

SPONSORS: Rep. Germana, Ches. 1

COMMITTEE: Election Law

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ANALYSIS

This establishes a committee to study whether to make working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility and legal obligation for citizens

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

**HB 259 - AS INTRODUCED**

23-0269
04/08

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Three*

AN ACT relative to a study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility and legal obligation for citizens.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1 Committee Established. There is established a committee to study requiring the secretary of state's office to carry out a feasibility study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility.

2 Membership and Compensation.

I. The members of the committee shall be as follows:

(a) Three members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives.

(b) Two members of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

II. Members of the committee shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when attending to the duties of the committee.

3 Duties. The committee shall study whether to require the secretary of state's office to carry out a feasibility study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility, similar to serving jury duty. Despite the lack of evidence of widespread voter fraud or systematic error in voting machines, significant numbers of New Hampshire residents continue to doubt the accuracy and legitimacy of our elections. This would help restore confidence in the system by giving Granite Staters the opportunity to see the process in action. Increasing voter confidence will also help reduce the harassment of poll workers that is increasingly common by people who impute nefarious purposes to the poll workers who are performing a public service. Finally, it could lead to higher voter registration, as New Hampshire residents who have not been engaged in the political process before learn about it and its importance for their communities.

4 Chairperson; Quorum. The members of the study committee shall elect a chairperson from among the members. The first meeting of the committee shall be called by the first-named house member. The first meeting of the committee shall be held within 45 days of the effective date of this section. Three members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

5 Report. The committee shall report its findings and any recommendations for proposed legislation to the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, the house clerk, the senate clerk, the governor, and the state library on or before November 1, 2023.

6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**February 7, 2023**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE**

**The Committee on Election Law to which was referred HB 259,**

**AN ACT relative to a study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility and legal obligation for citizens. Having considered the same, report the same with the following resolution: RESOLVED, that it is INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE.**

**Rep. Aidan Ankarberg**

**FOR THE COMMITTEE**

Original: House Clerk
Cc: Committee Bill File

# COMMITTEE REPORT

| | |
|---|---|
| Committee: | **Election Law** |
| Bill Number: | **HB 259** |
| Title: | **relative to a study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility and legal obligation for citizens.** |
| Date: | **February 7, 2023** |
| Consent Calendar: | **CONSENT** |
| Recommendation: | **INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE** |

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bills creates a committee to study making working at polling places a civic responsibility. The Secretary of State spoke of an independent effort to entice veterans to fill these roles and his office does not believe the bill is needed at this time.

Vote 20-0.

Rep. Aidan Ankarberg
FOR THE COMMITTEE

Original: House Clerk
Cc: Committee Bill File

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Election Law

**HB 259,** relative to a study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility and legal obligation for citizens. **INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE.**

Rep. Aidan Ankarberg for Election Law. This bills creates a committee to study making working at polling places a civic responsibility. The Secretary of State spoke of an independent effort to entice veterans to fill these roles and his office does not believe the bill is needed at this time. **Vote 20-0.**

Original: House Clerk
Cc: Committee Bill File

# SIGN UP SHEET

To Register Opinion If Not Speaking

Bill #: HB259 Date: 1/31/23

Committee: Election Law

**** Please Print All Information ****

| Name | Address | Phone | Representing | Pro | Con |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rep. Daniel Popovici-Muller | | 603 267 4142 | Rock. 17 | | X |
| Linda Bundy | Antrim | 603 588 2254 | self | | ✓ |
| Shaun Thomas | City and Town Clerks Assoc. | | | | X |
| Deb Roux | 97 Springwood Way | (603)24 25150 | Self | ✓ | |
| Liz Tentarelli | Newbury | | self | | X |
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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTION LAW**

**PUBLIC HEARING ON HB 259**

**BILL TITLE:** **relative to a study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility and legal obligation for citizens.**

**DATE:** **January 31, 2023**

**LOB ROOM:** **306-308** **Time Public Hearing Called to Order:** **2:09 p.m.**

**Time Adjourned:** **2:28 p.m.**

**Committee Members: Reps. Berry, Grill, Boehm, Qualey, Ankarberg, Burnham, Kennedy, Wherry, Wood, Lane, Ward, Hamer, Hamblet, Muirhead, Bay, Brennan and H. Howard**

**Bill Sponsors:**
**Rep. Germana**

**TESTIMONY**

* Use asterisk if written testimony and/or amendments are submitted.

Acting Chair Berry opened the public hearing.

Rep. Germana, sponsor, introduced the bill and spoke in support. He said that one of his favorite memory as a child was going to town meeting day. He said that NH has a very special political culture and that while we have high voter turnout and confidence, we also have issues with voter confidence. He stated that his bill encourages us to think about working at elections in the same way as jury duty, as a civic responsibility. He said that Germany has requirements for voters to work at the polls and that this is an important development in response to their history of authoritarianism. He said that there are a number of aspects of our political culture that could be served well by thinking about election participation similar to a jury process. He said that the closer voters are to their local elections, the more likely they are to be confident in the results and that making voters more involved in the process would increase confidence. He also said that the bill would likely increase voter turnout and engagement. He expressed concern about our current culture of harassment of poll workers and said that this was a result of our political divisiveness, and that this bill would bring average citizens into the process and hopefully break down the "us vs. them" mentality. He said that there are a lot of ways this could play out and the feasibility study outlined in this bill would explore these ways.

SOS David Scanlan spoke in support of the bill. He said that education is a good way to increase confidence in our elections and that the best way to learn about the process is to participate by working at the polls. He said that a jury duty-like system would likely be infeasible but there might be other ways to ask for voters to volunteer and participate.

Rep. Hamer asked whether potential poll workers under the jury system would have to go through training. SOS Scanlan said that they should, and that currently poll workers do not have to go to training. He said this effort might help people ease into the training process.

Rep. Muirhead asked whether SOS Scanlan would favor other ways to invite people to volunteer (such as radio ads). SOS Scanlan answered yes and said he is looking for other ways to encourage poll worker participation. He referenced an effort to encourage veterans to work at the polls.

Rep. Wood asked whether the SOS office would need legislation to establish a committee. SOS Scanlan said that they would work on this anyway but a study committee would bring in ideas he hadn't thought of.

Rep. Wherry asked about the possibility of high school students working at the polls as part of civics

education. SOS Scanlan said that this was a good idea and that we should involve young people in elections early.

Rep. Burnham asked whether he knew of many other states that made this a requirement. SOS Scanlan said he did not know of any. Rep. Burnham said that this was one of the biggest challenges to working at the polls, and asked whether there would be penalties for those who were selected and did not volunteer. SOS Scanlan said he did not support mandating poll worker service, but said that voters could be invited to participate via the same system. Rep. Burnham suggested that high school student participation is a good idea to move forward with. SOS Scanlan said that communities could utilize younger people to serve at the polls in non-election-official capacity, like serving food.

Rep. Bay asked that with regards to voters who need to take paid time off to work at the polls, would there be a requirement for employers to allow their employees to take PTO for the time? SOS Scanlan said that this would need to be developed.

Rep. Brennan asked whether SOS Scanlan would need legislation to create his own committee to explore similar concepts that would involve legislators. SOS Scanlan answered no.

Acting Chair Berry read the results of the blue sign-in sheet: 1 in favor, 4 opposed.

Acting Chair Berry closed the public hearing.

# House Remote Testify

## Election Law Committee Testify List for Bill HB259 on 2023-01-31

Support: 7  Oppose: 10  Neutral: 0  Total to Testify: 0

Export to Excel

| Name | City, State<br>Email Address | Title | Representing | Position | Testifying | Non-Germane | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trought, Elizabeth A | Dorchester, NH<br>batrought@gmail.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Support | No | No | |
| Kudlik, Cindy | Grafton, NH<br>CindyKudlik@protonmail.com | An Elected Official | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Richman, Susan | Durham, NH<br>susan7richman@gmail.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Support | No | No | |
| Smith, Julie | Nashua, NH<br>cantdog@comcast.net | A Member of the Public | Myself | Support | No | No | |
| Sims, Julie | Guild, NH<br>Jpmom39@gmail.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Support | No | No | |
| Wikstrom, Kathleen | Exeter, NH<br>kjwikstrom@gmail.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Creem, Jeffrey | Nashua, NH<br>jeff@thecreems.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Creem, Melissa | Nashua, NH<br>melissa@thecreems.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Coon, Kate | Peterborough, NH<br>kate2coon@gmail.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Support | No | Yes | |
| Howland, Curtis | Manchester, NH<br>howland@priss.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Fuentes, Sebastian | Thornton, NH<br>sebastian@radnh.org | A Lobbyist | Rights & Democracy NH | Support | No | No | |
| Richardson, Daniel | Nashua, NH<br>daniel6_22@comcast.net | A Member of the Public | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Bakie, Tammy | Kingston, NH<br>townclerk@kingstonnh.org | An Elected Official | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Anastasia, Patricia | Londonderry, NH<br>patti.anastasia@gmail.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Sweeney, Margaret | Campton, NH<br>MS975@protonmail.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Support | No | No | |
| Petrusewicz, Carol | Rochester, NH<br>clmcc2befree@yahoo.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |
| Alleman, Bill | Weare, NH<br>gencourt@allemanse.com | A Member of the Public | Myself | Oppose | No | No | |

No such obligation should ever be demanded of citizens. As former BSA troop chair, I understand conveying civic duty to youngsters, but you cannot compel compliance with morals.

Tammy Bakie

The laws change to quickly, even a seasoned ballot clerk has trouble keeping up.  This would be a complete disaster!

The last thing we need is election workers who are there unwillingly. Election workers need to be engaged in the election process.

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTION LAW

## EXECUTIVE SESSION on HB 259

**BILL TITLE:** relative to a study about making working at polling places on election day a civic responsibility and legal obligation for citizens.

**DATE:** February 7, 2023

**LOB ROOM:** 306-308

**MOTIONS:** **INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE**

Moved by Rep. Ankarberg | Seconded by Rep. Berry | Vote: 20-0

**CONSENT CALENDAR: YES**

**Statement of Intent:** Refer to Committee Report

Respectfully submitted,

Rep Jessica Grill, Clerk

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK

1/5/2023 1:43:00 PM
Roll Call Committee Registers Report

2023 SESSION

## Election Law

**Bill #:** HB 259 **Motion:** ITL **AM #:** _____ **Exec Session Date:** Feb. 7, 2023

| Members | YEAS | Nays | NV |
|---|---|---|---|
| Smith, Steven D. Chairman | X | | |
| Berry, Ross Vice Chairman | X | | |
| Prudhomme-O'Brien, Katherine J. | X | | |
| Boehm, Ralph G. | X | | |
| Qualey, James R. | X | | |
| Ankarberg, Aidan | X | | |
| Burnham, Claudine R | X | | |
| Kennedy, Stephen J. | X | | |
| Wherry, Robert J | X | | |
| Wood, Clayton D | X | | |
| Lane, Connie Boyles | X | | |
| Ward, Gerald W.R. | X | | |
| Hamer, Heidi M. | X | | |
| Hamblet, Joan L. | X | | |
| Muirhead, Russell | X | | |
| Bay, Luz | X | | |
| Brennan, Angela | X | | |
| Grill, Jessica | X | | |
| Howard, Heath | X | | |
| **TOTAL VOTE:** | 20 | 0 | |

Palmer X