

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

Vivian Hall 271-3091

HB 1247, requiring the secretary of state to create, post on the secretary of state's website, and otherwise distribute notice of proposed constitutional amendments.

Hearing Date: April 1, 2026

Time Opened: 1:15 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:21 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Perkins Kwoka, Long, Gray and Lang

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Rochefort

Bill Analysis: This bill requires the secretary of state to create, post on the secretary of state's website, and otherwise distribute notice of proposed constitutional amendments.

Sponsors:

Rep. Wherry

Rep. Burnham

Rep. McFarlane

Rep. McGrath

Rep. Mary Murphy

Rep. Wood

Who supports the bill: 54 individuals signed in support of HB 1247. Contact jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov for further details.

Who opposes the bill: Bonnie Bruno and Peg Sheets.

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Robert Wherry, Hillsborough District13

- HB 1247 would require early public notice of constitutional amendments, including a new notification displayed by town and city clerks about two months before a vote.
- The notice, provided by the Secretary of State, would explain the amendment and direct voters to an official website for more information.
- Representative Wherry explained that the goal of HB 1247 is to increase voter awareness and prevent confusion by ensuring more people know about proposed constitutional changes well in advance.

Brendan O'Donnell, Deputy Secretary of State

Senator Gray asked for clarification on lines six through eight regarding the language used.

Mr. O'Donnell explained that the referenced lines apply only to the notice's header and not its' content. He added that the wording doesn't need to be exact and explained that the Secretary of State's office would use the legislature's description verbatim, which would avoid any discretion or concern about influencing the message.

Senator Gray asked if he had any objections to how it is currently written.

Mr. O'Donnell said he did not.

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 2, 2026