

# Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

*Jessica Bourque 271-2104*

**HB 1601-FN**, requiring the secretary of state to create a voter education program that includes information on recent changes to voting laws.

**Hearing Date:** March 31, 2026

**Time Opened:** 9:25 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 9:40 a.m.

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

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill requires the secretary of state to create a voter education program that includes information on recent changes to voting laws.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. Wilhelm

Rep. Berry

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**Who supports the bill:** 132 people signed in to support the bill. For a complete list of names, please contact committee aide, Jessica Bourque at [jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov](mailto:jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov)

**Who opposes the bill:** 3 people signed in opposed to the bill. For a complete list of names, please contact committee aide, Jessica Bourque at [jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov](mailto:jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov)

**Who is neutral on the bill:** David Scanlan, Secretary of State

**Summary of testimony presented:**

**Representative Matt Wilhelm, Hillsborough - District 21**

- Directs the Secretary of State (SOS) to create a voter education program to educate voters on recent changes in election law.
- Some of those changes include what documentation is acceptable.
- Voters should clearly understand the laws that affect them before they arrive to vote.
- This is fiscally responsible, utilizing \$50,000 of the funds from the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). There is no impact on the state's general fund.
- This is about transparency, clarity, and fairness. When voters understand the rules, elections run more smoothly, and public trust in our democratic process grows.

### **Chase Eagleson, NH Council on Developmental Disabilities**

- Supports this bill.
- Asked the legislature to use straightforward, plain language and promote it in both digital and print formats once this program begins.

### **Liz Tentarelli, League of Women Voters**

- They do a lot of voter education. Often, they will boost the Facebook page of the SOS.
- Encourages the use of these funds to enhance SOS information through methods beyond social media.

### **Linda Bundy, Antrim**

- 244 NH voters were unable to vote in the last election and described several of those cases.
- Supervisors expressed concern about long lines to vote.
- Believes that there is no longer a guaranteed right to vote because obtaining documents can take weeks.
- If voters had known about the law changes, they may have had time to obtain the documents needed and the requirements.
- Education should be done through a variety of media well in advance of the elections.

### **Sarah Ortiz, Open Democracy**

- Supports this bill.
- This bill seeks to solve the issues where people might show up to vote but don't know that laws have changed.
- This program will reach many voters and election officials.
- Elections run smoother when everyone understands the current rules.

### **David Scanlan, NH Secretary of State**

- Does not believe this bill is necessary; they now have a media outreach person, and they have a substantial presence on social media. He also speaks with groups weekly.
- A key aspect of voter education involves training election officials, and efforts are underway to expand this training.
- Has strong working relationships with NH media.
- Doesn't know what else can be done beyond what they already do.

**Senator Perkins Kwoka** said that postcards were the plan to inform voters of the new laws and asked if that is still the plan.

**Secretary Scanlan** confirmed that the plan remains in place and that it is a big undertaking.

**Senator Lang** said he sees the effort the SOS is making, and it is significant and thanked Secretary Scanlan.

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 3, 2026