

# Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

*Jessica Bourque 271-2104*

**HB 1272**, providing an option for each candidate's party affiliations to be printed on the town or school district ballot.

**Hearing Date:** March 31, 2026

**Time Opened:** 1:59 p.m.

**Time Closed:** 2:11 p.m.

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

**Members of the Committee Absent:** Senators Lang and Rochefort

**Bill Analysis:** This bill provides an option for each candidate's party affiliation to be printed on the town or school district ballot.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. Wherry

Rep. Ford

Rep. McGrath

Rep. Mary Murphy

Rep. Pauer

Rep. R. Brown

Rep. Sellers

Rep. Tom Mannion

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**Who supports the bill:** 9 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:** 157 people signed in opposed to this 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:** None

**Summary of testimony presented:**

**Representative Bob Wherry, Hillsborough-District 13**

- Allows school districts to adopt partisan school district ballots.
- This is double enabling. The town or school district would need to choose, and then the candidate would also need to choose as well.
- Believes it offers greater transparency.
- North Carolina did a study that said they had a greater turnout when they adopted this.

**Aubrey Freedman, Bridgewater**

- Supports this bill.

- Many voters often lack knowledge about candidates, so they don't go to vote.
- When you have controversial topics, there is already partisanship.
- This information is useful for understanding the political affiliation of the candidates.

### **Eric Pauer, School District Governance Association**

- Allows towns and school districts to decide whether to hold partisan elections.
- People wonder why they can't put party affiliation on a ballot. Others ask why there isn't party affiliation listed.

### **Cordell Johnston, Henniker Town Moderator**

- Speaking on behalf of himself.
- Believes towns do school board elections well.
- When he votes, he chooses a candidate without knowing or caring which party his sewer commissioner is from.
- Having a D or R next to the name doesn't give any useful information.
- What is important is that people do a good job.
- This will make local-level elections more bitter and decisive.
- Usually supports towns having a choice, but there are some choices that are so bad that they shouldn't have a choice, and this is one of those times.

### **Brodie Deshaies, NH Municipal Association**

- RSA 669:12 already permits the adoption of partisan elections.
- Voters can access the voter checklist and verify a candidate's party affiliation.
- The general public can usually get an understanding of a candidate's affiliation by listening to them.

**Senator Perkins Kwoka** asked if she thinks a pothole cares if someone is a Democrat or a Republican?

**Mr. Deshaies** said he doesn't think a pothole cares whether it is Republican, Democrat, or Independent; it just needs to be filled.