

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

Jessica Bourque 271-2104

HB 1695, preventing any guide or explanation regarding the effect of a proposed constitutional amendment from appearing on the ballot.

Hearing Date: April 21, 2026

Time Opened: 9:16 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:20 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 prevents any guide or explanation regarding the effect of a proposed constitutional amendment from appearing on the ballot.

Sponsors:

Rep. Lane

Rep. Muirhead

Rep. Bay

Rep. Ward

Sen. Reardon

Sen. Perkins Kwoka

Who supports the bill: 41 people signed in to support the bill. For a full list of names, please contact committee aide, Jessica Bourque at jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov

Who opposes the bill: 11 people signed in opposed to the bill. For a full list of names, please contact committee aide, Jessica Bourque at jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov

Who is neutral on the bill: 1 person signed in neutral on the bill. For a full list of names, please contact committee aide, Jessica Bourque at jessica.bourque@gc.nh.gov

Summary of testimony presented:

Senator Lang introduced the bill on behalf of the prime sponsor.

Senator Perkins Kwoka, who co-sponsored the bill, explained that it is a clean-up measure designed to clarify voters' understanding of what they are voting on.

Brendan O'Donnell, Deputy Secretary of State

- Neutral on this bill.
- The Secretary of State's Office has concerns about the wording of this bill.
- This bill does two things:

- Requires that the constitutional amendment be on the ballot using strike-through and bold formatting.
 - Also removes the language that permits voter guides.
- Requiring the entire question to be in bold and removing the language when printed will increase the size of the text on the ballot, lengthen the ballot, and confuse many voters because they will have to determine what is being removed and what is being added.
- The voter guide assists voters by making the voting information clearer and easier to understand.
- Having the ability to add a voter guide is helpful because the language can be confusing to read and understand. The voter guide helps voters understand the impact of changing a word and how that change would affect a voter.

Senator Gray said that he seems to recall that the statute now provides that if anything is to be added to the question, that language must be included in the bill as it is passed by the legislature.

Mr. O'Donnell said that Senator Gray is correct. This bill would remove that language from RSA 663:3-a.