

HB 1541-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2744

08/06

HOUSE BILL **1541-FN**

AN ACT requiring the secretary of state to provide all voting precincts with secure containers for storing ballots.

SPONSORS: Rep. Porcelli, Rock. 19; Rep. Bernardy, Rock. 36; Rep. Burnham, Straf. 2; Rep. Kuttab, Rock. 17; Rep. Nelson, Rock. 13; Rep. See, Merr. 26; Rep. Wherry, Hills. 13; Rep. Wood, Merr. 13; Rep. Tenczar, Hills. 1; Rep. McGrath, Rock. 40; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. McGough, Dist 11

COMMITTEE: Election Law

ANALYSIS

This bill requires the secretary of state to provide all voting precincts with secure containers for storing ballots.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT requiring the secretary of state to provide all voting precincts with secure containers for storing ballots.

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

1 1 Secretary of State to Prepare Containers, Sealers. Amend RSA 659:97 to read as follows:
2 659:97 Secretary of State to Prepare Containers, Sealers. The secretary of state shall, before
3 any state **and federal** election, prepare and distribute to each town and ward clerk **secure,**
4 **durable, reusable, transportable, stackable and marked** containers to be used for preserving
5 ballots **with locks, tamper-evident** [and] sealers [~~to seal each such container~~] **and registration or**
6 **serial numbers for each marked containers.** [He] **The secretary of state** shall prepare special
7 **durable and easily transportable** containers **capable of being secured** and **with tamper-**
8 **evident** sealers to be used for preserving any special and separate ballots for questions to voters.
9 The secretary of state shall prescribe the size and form of such containers, **locks** and **tamper-**
10 **evident** sealers and shall prescribe the form of any endorsement blank printed upon the sealers,
11 provided that the blank is in substance consistent with the provisions of RSA 659:95. **The secretary**
12 **of state shall implement the secure container replacement program using available**
13 **funding pursuant to the Help America Vote Act of 2002, Public Law 107-252, with**
14 **measurable progress reported each year. The secretary of state shall prepare this annual**
15 **progress report and will include the number of secure containers replaced, locations, and**
16 **planned container replacement for the following year.**

17 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

**HB 1541-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT requiring the secretary of state to provide all voting precincts with secure containers for storing ballots.

FISCAL IMPACT: This bill does not provide funding, nor does it authorize new positions.

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	None			
Expenditures*	\$0	Indeterminable Increase		
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Funds/General Fund			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	None			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill

*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

METHODOLOGY:

This bill requires the Secretary of State to provide all voting precincts with secure, durable, reusable, and tamper-evident containers for storing ballots. These containers must be lockable, stackable, transportable, and individually numbered. Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Funds shall be used for implementation of the secure container replacement program. Additionally, the Secretary of State shall provide an annual progress report to include the number of secure containers replaced, locations, and planned container replacement for the following year.

The Department of State indicates the bill would necessitate the purchase and distribution of these containers and related materials before each election. The containers would need to accommodate various ballot sizes and quantities, requiring custom manufacturing. The Secretary of State anticipates needing enough containers for five elections initially, after which only replacements or additional units would be necessary. The fiscal impact is indeterminable due to unknown costs for manufacturing, shipping, and potential funding limitations. There are no funds currently appropriated for this initiative, and the Secretary of State would need to seek clarification from the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) on whether Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds can be used for these purchases.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of State