

HB 481 - VERSION ADOPTED BY BOTH BODIES

26Mar2025... 1360h
01/07/2026 3068s

2025 SESSION

25-0794
07/08

HOUSE BILL **481**

AN ACT relative to the state primary date.

SPONSORS: Rep. Schultz, Merr. 29; Rep. Berry, Hills. 44; Rep. Gregg, Hills. 7; Rep. Moffett, Merr. 4; Sen. Lang, Dist 2

COMMITTEE: Election Law

ANALYSIS

This bill moves the state primary date to June.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struck through.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT relative to the state primary date.

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

1 1 Election of Officers and Delegates; Election Dates; State Primary Election. Amend RSA 653:8
2 to read as follows:

3 653:8 State Primary Election. The state primary election shall be held on the second Tuesday in
4 ~~September~~ **June** of every even-numbered year.

5 2 Voters and Checklists; Hearings on Alterations to Party Registration. Amend RSA 654:32 to
6 read as follows:

7 654:32 Hearings on Alterations to Party Registration. Before each state or presidential primary
8 election, the supervisors of the checklist shall be in session before each primary for the change of
9 registration of legal voters as provided in RSA 654:34 or 654:34-a or both. Before the presidential
10 primary, the session shall be on the Friday preceding the first day of the filing period, between 7:00
11 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and at the discretion of the supervisors for extended hours. Before the state
12 primary election, the session shall be on Tuesday before the first ~~Wednesday~~ **Friday** in ~~June~~
13 **March** between 7:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and at the discretion of the supervisors for extended hours.

14 3 Voters and Checklists; Change of Registration. Amend RSA 654:34, IV to read as follows:

15 IV. No person, who is already registered to vote, whether his **or her** party membership has
16 been previously registered or not, shall affiliate with a party or disaffiliate from a party between the
17 first ~~Wednesday~~ **Friday** in ~~June~~ **March** and the day before the state primary election.

18 4 Elections; Nominations by Primary; Filing: General Provisions. Amend RSA 655:14 to read as
19 follows:

20 655:14 Filing; General Provisions. The name of any person shall not be printed upon the ballot
21 of any party for a primary unless he or she is a registered member of that party, he or she shall have
22 met the age and domicile qualifications for the office he or she seeks at the time of the general
23 election, he or she meets all the other qualifications at the time of filing, and he or she shall file with
24 the appropriate official between the first ~~Wednesday~~ **Friday** in ~~June~~ **March** and the Friday of
25 the following week a declaration of candidacy as provided in RSA 655:17.

26 5 Elections; Nominations; Personal Filing. Amend RSA 655:16 to read as follows:

27 655:16 Personal Filing. Except for those who must file with a town or city clerk, any person who
28 files on the last day of the filing period must do so in person before the secretary of state~~[- provided,~~
29 ~~however, that this requirement shall not apply to the filling of vacancies by party committees. If the~~

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1 ~~person must file with a town or city clerk and is filing on the last day of the filing period, he or she~~
2 ~~shall do so in person].~~

3 6 Elections; Nominations by Primary. Amend RSA 655:21 to read as follows:

4 655:21 Form. Primary petitions shall be made in the following form:

5 State of New Hampshire

6 County of _____ ss.

7 City (Town) of _____

8 I do hereby join in a petition for the printing on the primary ballot of the name of
9 _____ whose domicile is in the city (town) of _____ (ward, street, and
10 number, if in a city), in the county of _____, for the office of _____ to be voted for on
11 Tuesday, the ____ day of [~~September~~] **June**, ____ (year), and certify that I am qualified to vote for
12 a candidate for said office, that I am a registered member of the _____ party, and am not at
13 this time a signer of any other similar petition for any other candidate for the above office; that my
14 domicile is in the city (town) of _____ (ward, street, and number, if in a city), in the county of
15 _____. I certify that to my knowledge the above-named candidate is not a candidate for
16 incompatible offices as defined in RSA 655:10, and that he or she is not a federal employee which
17 makes him or her ineligible to file as a candidate for this office. I further certify that I believe the
18 above-named person is especially qualified to fill said office.

19 I hereby swear, under the penalties for voting fraud set forth below, that the information above
20 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

21 _____

22 Print Voter's name

23 _____

24 Voter's Signature

25 In accordance with RSA 659:34, the penalty for knowingly or purposefully providing false
26 information when registering to vote or voting is a class A misdemeanor with a maximum sentence
27 of imprisonment not to exceed one year and a fine not to exceed \$2,000. Fraudulently registering to
28 vote or voting is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$5,000.

29 7 Elections; Nomination by Primary; Examination and Rejection. Amend RSA 655:26 to read as
30 follows:

31 655:26 Examination and Rejection. The officer with whom primary petitions are filed shall
32 immediately upon receipt thereof examine the same and ascertain whether they conform to the law.
33 If found not to conform thereto or to be conflicting as provided in RSA 655:23, [~~he~~] **they** shall then
34 endorse thereon the reason why such petition cannot be accepted and shall, within 24 hours, return
35 the same to the candidate in whose behalf it was filed. In such case, the candidate may file
36 supplementary petitions with the official, but not later than the third [~~Wednesday~~] **Friday** in [~~June~~]
37 **March**.

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1 8 Elections; Nominations; Straw Candidates. Amend RSA 655:31 to read as follows:

2 655:31 Straw Candidates. No person shall be a candidate for nomination at any primary unless
3 his candidacy is bona fide and is filed for the actual purpose of personally seeking the nomination.
4 Any candidate for nomination whose name is to be voted upon at primary election may, no later than
5 the ~~Wednesday~~ **Friday** after the last day for filing declarations of candidacy and primary petitions,
6 file a petition with the ballot law commission alleging that one or more candidates for the same
7 nomination is not a bona fide candidate. Upon receipt of such a petition, the commission shall notify
8 in writing all candidates of that party for the same nomination of the time and place for its hearing.
9 After such hearing, the ballot law commission shall have the power and duty to order stricken
10 forthwith from the primary ballot the name or names of any candidate or candidates for said
11 nomination if the commission finds that such candidate or candidates is obviously not a bona fide
12 candidate, obviously having filed not primarily for the purpose of seeking the nomination but
13 primarily for the purpose of drawing votes which might otherwise be cast for some other candidate
14 for the same nomination. The decision of the commission shall be final as to questions both of law
15 and fact, and no court shall have jurisdiction to review such decision.

16 9 Elections; Nominations; No Declaration Filed. Amend RSA 655:32, I to read as follows:

17 I. In case no declaration shall be filed by a candidate for any nomination to be voted for at a
18 primary, the nomination may be made by the appropriate party committee as provided in this
19 section. The appropriate party committee shall notify the secretary of state in writing of a person it
20 designates to fill the vacancy. The person so designated may accept the nomination by, on or before
21 the ~~Wednesday~~ **second Friday** following the expiration of the period for filing declarations of
22 candidacy as provided in RSA 655:14, filing with the secretary of state a declaration of candidacy as
23 provided in RSA 655:17. Any candidate accepting a nomination under this paragraph who has
24 already filed for an incompatible office as defined in RSA 655:10 shall withdraw the prior filing. Any
25 vacancy created by the withdrawal of a filing may be filled pursuant to this section. If the candidate
26 is designated for the office of governor, councilor, state senator, or state representative, he or she
27 shall also file on or before the ~~Wednesday~~ **second Friday** following the period for filing
28 declarations of candidacy the appropriate affidavit as provided in RSA 655:29. Any candidate so
29 designated by a party committee who has not filed all the forms required by this section within the
30 required period of time shall not have his or her name printed on the state primary election ballot for
31 that office.

32 10 Elections; Nominations; Certification. Amend RSA 655:41, I to read as follows:

33 I. Each nomination paper shall be submitted to the supervisors of the checklist of the town
34 or ward in which the signer is domiciled or is registered, and a majority of the supervisors shall
35 certify whether or not the signer is a registered voter in said town or ward. The supervisors of the
36 checklist shall certify nomination papers under this section in a timely fashion, so that their
37 certification shall be complete for each candidate, together with any objections to the nomination

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1 papers submitted, no later than 5:00 p.m. on the ~~[Wednesday]~~ **Friday** 2 weeks before the primary.
2 Each nomination paper shall be submitted to the supervisors of the checklist no later than 5:00 p.m.
3 on the ~~[Wednesday]~~ **Friday** 5 weeks before the primary.

4 11 Elections; Nominations; Filing Deadline. Amend RSA 655:43, I to read as follows:

5 I. Nomination papers shall be filed with the secretary of state no later than 5:00 p.m. on the
6 ~~[Wednesday]~~ **Friday** one week before the primary. Nomination papers to be filed shall be grouped
7 by municipality. No nomination papers shall be accepted by the secretary of state unless the
8 candidate shall have met the age and domicile qualifications for the office he or she seeks at the time
9 of the general election and meets all the other qualifications at the time of filing; and if a candidate
10 for the office of governor, executive councilor, state senator, or state representative, unless the
11 candidate shall file with the nomination papers an affidavit of qualifications as provided in RSA
12 655:28 and 655:29; and if a candidate for United States senator or United States representative,
13 unless the candidate shall meet the qualifications for office under RSA 655:3 and 655:4.

14 12 Ballot Law Commission; Hearing Date. Amend the introductory paragraph of RSA 665:5, I
15 to read as follows:

16 I. If necessary, the ballot law commission shall meet on the third Thursday of ~~[September]~~
17 **June** in each general election year and the third Friday following the presidential primary election
18 in order to hear and decide:

19 13 Appointment of Inspectors of Election. Amend RSA 658:2 to read as follows:
20 658:2 Appointment.

21 Each state political committee of the 2 political parties which received the largest number of
22 votes cast for governor at the last previous general election is authorized through their respective
23 chairmen to appoint between May 15 and July 15 of each general election year 2 inspectors of
24 election to act at each polling place. If the number of voters qualified to vote at a polling place shall
25 exceed 2,000, said political committees may each appoint for such polling place one additional
26 inspector for each 1,500 qualified voters or fraction thereof in excess of 2,000. By April 15 of each
27 general election year, the secretary of state shall provide a list to the chairman of each such state
28 political committee of the number of inspectors of election that should be appointed for each town or
29 ward. Each such state political committee may also appoint such equal number of additional
30 inspectors as the moderator considers necessary for the efficient conduct of the election. ~~[On or~~
31 ~~before July 15]~~ **Between February 1 and April 30**, the chairmen of said political committees shall
32 notify the appointees and the town or ward clerk concerned as to appointments made under this
33 authority. If any such appointments are not made by said political committees and proper
34 notification thereof given ~~[on or before July 15]~~ **between February 1 and April 30**, then the
35 appointments shall be made by the selectmen of the town or ward in equal numbers from said 2
36 political parties.

37 14 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2028.