

HB 693-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2025 SESSION

25-0532

05/09

HOUSE BILL **693-FN**

AN ACT relative to ballot counting procedures and permitting the hand counting of ballots.

SPONSORS: Rep. Porcelli, Rock. 19; Rep. Bernardy, Rock. 36; Rep. DeVito, Rock. 8; Rep. McGrath, Rock. 40; Rep. Burnham, Straf. 2; Rep. Perez, Rock. 16; Rep. Panek, Hills. 1; Rep. Manohar, Hills. 9

COMMITTEE: Election Law

ANALYSIS

This bill provides that a voter may request to have their ballot counted by hand rather than by an electronic ballot counting device. The bill also provides that the selectmen and town clerk are permitted to hand count ballots cast in an election.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.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

AN ACT relative to ballot counting procedures and permitting the hand counting of ballots.

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

1 1 Voting Procedure; Casting Ballots; Hand Counts Permitted. Amend RSA 659:23, II to read as
2 follows:

3 II.(a) In cities and towns where an electronic ballot counting device is used for the counting
4 of ballots, as provided in RSA 656:40, a voter, after leaving the voting booth or voting privacy screen,
5 shall feed their ballot into the electronic ballot counting device or follow the moderator's instruction
6 for casting the ballot before leaving the guardrail. Privacy folders shall be available at the polling
7 place for voters to use when carrying the marked ballot from the voting booth or voting privacy
8 screen to the ballot counting device.

9 ***(b) Notwithstanding subparagraph (a), a voter may present their ballot to the***
10 ***moderator for hand counting. Privacy folders shall be available at the polling place for***
11 ***this purpose.***

12 2 Duties of Moderator and Authority of Selectmen and Town Clerk to Conduct a Hand Count of
13 Ballots Cast. Amend RSA 659:60 to read as follows:

14 659:60 Duties of Moderator ***and Authority of Selectmen and Town Clerk to Conduct a***
15 ***Hand Count of Ballots Cast.***

16 I. The moderator, or the moderator pro tempore if the moderator is disqualified under RSA
17 658:24, shall oversee the counting of votes by other election officers, including the selectmen and the
18 town clerk, and may discharge any other duties relating to the counting of votes.

19 II. ***Nothing in this section or any other provision of law shall preclude the***
20 ***selectmen or town clerk from, at their discretion, conducting a supplemental hand count to***
21 ***confirm election results for a specific race, or from conducting a hand count of ballots not***
22 ***processed through a voting machine or counted from a machine that failed during the***
23 ***voting period.***

24 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

**HB 693-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT relative to ballot counting procedures and permitting the hand counting of ballots.

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

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	None			
Expenditures*	\$0	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	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

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
County Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
County Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Expenditures	\$0	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase

METHODOLOGY:

This bill allows a voter to request to have their ballot counted by hand rather than by an electronic ballot counting device. The bill also provides that the selectmen and town clerk are permitted to hand count ballots cast in an election.

The Department of State states this bill could significantly impact town and city expenditures. If a large number of voters request hand counting, it would greatly increase the time required for election workers, leading to additional costs for the extra hours worked. This could range from several hundred to thousands of dollars at each polling location. Additionally, the Department would incur costs for training and privacy folders located at the polling location.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of State