

# Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

*Jessica Bourque 271-2104*

**SB 215**, requiring an unorganized town or unincorporated place to elect town officers for the purpose of conducting elections.

**Hearing Date:** March 4, 2025

**Time Opened:** 9:35 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 9:40 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 requires an unorganized town or unincorporated place to elect town officers for the purpose of conducting elections.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. McConkey

Sen. Lang

Sen. Birdsell

Rep. J. Smith

Rep. Hill

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**Who supports the bill:** David Scanlan

**Who opposes the bill:** No one

**Summary of testimony presented:**

**Senator Lang introduced the bill on behalf of the prime sponsor, Senator McConkey**

**David Scanlan, New Hampshire Secretary of State**

- This would require organization for the purpose of elections once an unincorporated location reaches a certain population.
- Unincorporated locations don't have a town government, but the law allows them to organize for elections only.
- 3 unincorporated locations have organized; Hart's Location, Dixville Notch, and Millsfield.
- When redistricting every 10 years, unincorporated locations are assigned to an adjacent incorporated community within the same state representative district. Therefore, unincorporated locations must be re-aligned with incorporated locations during redistricting.

- Hale's Location is unincorporated and unorganized. It has a sizeable population and has been aligned with the Town of Conway in the past. However, after the last redistricting, it could no longer be aligned with Conway, so it was re-aligned with Bartlett.
- The Bartlett selectmen have had issues with the realignment due to the Town's responsibilities during elections and the strain it places on their polling place.
- Believes this bill is a good approach to solving the problem.

Senator Lang asked if a town has to keep two books, one for the town and one for the unincorporated location.

- Secretary Scanlan said that was correct and that essentially one polling place runs two elections simultaneously.

Senator Perkins Kwoka asked how the process of electing officials is conducted.

- Secretary Scanlan said there is a process in the statute that lays it out. It requires a notice to the residents of the unincorporated place that there will be a meeting for organizing, where officials will be elected.

Senator Perkins Kwoka asked what would happen if no volunteers came forward.

- Some towns face that problem. If there are still vacancies after the organization meeting then there are appointing authorities who could reach out to people and find people to do the job.

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Date Hearing Report completed: March 7, 2025