

# Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

*Jessica Bourque 271-2104*

**SB 16**, requiring municipalities to post a copy of election return forms on their websites and in public locations.

**Hearing Date:** January 14, 2025

**Time Opened:** 9:51 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 10:01 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Gray, Lang, Rochefort, Perkins Kwoka and Long

**Bill Analysis:** This bill requires municipalities to post a copy of election return forms on their websites and in public locations.

---

**Sponsors:**

Sen. Gray

---

**Who supports the bill:** Senator Gray, Ken Barnes, Kate Horgan, Autumn Raschick-Goodwin

**Who opposes the bill:** Margaret Byrnes

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Senator James Gray, District 6**

- Requires municipalities to post a copy of the election result sheet that towns send to the Secretary of State on the town website.
- After the last election people asked how to find out about all of the write-ins because the Secretary of State's website does not list all of the write-ins.
- The sheet that towns provide to the Secretary of State contains the write-in information so by posting that sheet locally the issue would be resolved.
- Some folks have asked if a town could take a picture of the sheet to post. He doesn't see a problem with that.
- Right now some towns post in a couple of locations and others post only in one location.

Senator Perkins Kwoka said that the language is pretty general. She supports the intent but wants to make sure towns are set up for success. Is enforcement intended to be encouragement?

- Senator Gray said that something like "may include" could be inserted into the language which would address her comment.

- Right now someone interested in the results have to either have to either go to the Secretary of State's office or go to the town office to get that information.

Senator Perkins Kwoka said that the committee received a letter from the City of Nashua asking not to require posting in a third location but she doesn't see where this bill would require a third location.

- Senator Gray said he reads the bill as stating the website would be the third location and they would post in two locations.

Senator Rochefort said he is thinking about his district which includes many small towns that don't necessarily have a town website. Senator Rochefort is wondering if this would impose a burden on those towns and asked how that could be addressed?

- Senator Gray said that is the reason for using the Secretary of State sheets which is something they are already doing.
- He doesn't want to impose a burden. They already have to fill out the sheet, they will just need to post it where people will see it. In most cases it is on the town website.

Senator Lang asked Senator Gray if he would be willing to amend the bill in order to address some of the concerns with the number of places towns have to post to.

- Senator Gray said he is willing to work with the committee to do what the bill needs in order to pass.

#### **Autumn Raschick-Goodwin, Open Democracy**

- Supports this bill.
- This bill provides transparency and accountability.
- Voters have the right to know election results.

#### **Summary of testimony presented in opposition:**

#### **Margaret Byrnes, NH Municipal Association**

- Has the same concerns that have been raised regarding the number of places a municipality would need to post to.
- Echoes the concerns of Senator Rochefort regarding smaller towns.
- Happy to work with the committee to address the municipality concerns.