

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

Jessica Bourque 271-2104

HB 367, changing the method for adopting partisan town elections to be the same as rescinding partisan town elections.

Hearing Date: May 6, 2025

Time Opened: 9:48 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:55 a.m.

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

Members of the Committee Absent: Senator Lang

Bill Analysis: This bill changes the method for adopting partisan town elections to be the same as rescinding partisan town elections.

Sponsors:

Rep. Wherry

Rep. Aylward

Rep. Boehm

Rep. Harvey-Bolia

Rep. Pauer

Rep. Creighton

Who supports the bill: Rep. Bob Wherry, Rep. Ross Berry, Rep. Diane Pauer

Who opposes the bill: Olivia Zink

Summary of testimony presented:

Representative Robert Wherry, Prime Sponsor, Hillsborough-District 13

- This clarifies language on how to transition from an unofficial ballot system to an official ballot system that is either partisan or non-partisan.
- This bill also clarifies the existing language regarding towns with a population of 4500, a standard established in the 1970s. Other sections of the laws have been revised in this context, but this seems to be one area where the issue still persists.

Senator Rochefort asked about the House committee report and said the report indicated that this was a unanimous vote, but it looks like it came out of committee 10-7.

- The amendment was unanimous, but the final vote out of committee was along bipartisan lines.

Senator Long asked if this affects cities and said it doesn't appear that it does.

- Rep. Wherry believes that it is covered by other statutes. If that isn't the case, he said he would be happy to address it in a follow-up bill.

Senator Long inquired whether the intent of this bill is to satisfy towns.

- Yes, there was confusion among several towns about how to switch between various modes. This was meant to clarify that confusion.

Senator Gray explained that city charters address these issues for cities.

Representative Ross Berry, Hillsborough-District

- Explained that there was a procedural kerfuffle to answer Senator Rochefort's question.

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Date Hearing Report completed: May 8, 2025