

Rep. Lane, Merr. 16
Rep. Brennan, Merr. 9
May 8, 2024
2024-1852h
02/06

Floor Amendment to SB 537-FN

1 Amend the bill by replacing section 2 with the following:

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3 2 Opening Absentee Ballot Outer Envelopes. RSA 659:49-b is repealed and reenacted to read as
4 follows:

5 659:49-b Opening Absentee Ballot Outer Envelopes.

6 The outer envelopes of absentee ballots may be opened by:

7 I. The town or city clerk or their designee on dates specified by the clerk. The clerk may
8 schedule up to 2 dates to open absentee ballot outer envelopes in the 3 weeks prior to the election.
9 The clerk shall post, at least 5 days prior to the dates in an appropriate public place a notice of the
10 time and place of the opening of the outer envelopes. After the outer envelope has been opened, the
11 affidavit envelope shall be examined for errors that could cause the absentee ballot to be rejected. If
12 correctable affidavit errors are found, the clerk or designee shall follow the guidance issued by the
13 secretary of state for correcting such errors. Affidavit envelopes shall be secured until they are
14 processed pursuant to RSA 659:50 or RSA 659:55-a.

15 II. The moderator or the moderator's designee during partial processing of absentee ballots
16 prior to an election as authorized in RSA 659:55-a. After the outer envelope has been opened, the
17 affidavit on the inner envelope shall be examined, the voter's name shall be announced, an
18 opportunity for a challenge of the ballot shall be given. Information on the checklist for the absentee
19 voter may be highlighted to help facilitate processing of the ballot on election day. If correctable
20 affidavit errors are found, the moderator or designee shall follow the guidance issued by the
21 secretary of state for correcting such errors. Affidavit envelopes shall be secured until they are
22 processed pursuant to RSA 659:50.

23 III. The moderator or the moderator's designee may open absentee ballot outer envelopes on
24 election day at any time after the opening of the polls. Affidavit envelopes shall be secured until
25 they are processed pursuant to RSA 659:50.

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27 Amend RSA 659:55-a, II as inserted by section 3 of the bill by replacing it with the following:

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29 II. Once notice of the processing has been posted, all absentee ballots received by the end of
30 the day preceding the posted time for the meeting shall be partially processed. Only one session for
31 the partial processing of absentee ballots may be scheduled prior to an election.

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1 Amend the bill by replacing sections 7 and 8 with the following:

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3 7 Processing Absentee Ballots. Amend the introductory paragraph in RSA 659:50, I to read as
4 follows:

5 I. The moderator shall begin processing absentee ballots by clearly announcing that ~~[he or~~
6 ~~she is about to open the envelopes which]~~ ***the processing of the absentee ballots that*** were
7 delivered to ~~[him or her]~~ ***the moderator is beginning***. The moderator shall then ~~[remove the~~
8 ~~envelope containing the ballots of each absentee voter and]~~, for those absentee ballots where the
9 absentee voter has not been verified by the clerk as provided in RSA 657:17-a, ~~[shall]~~ compare the
10 signature on the affidavit with the signature on the application for the ballot. If:

11 8 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.