

CHAPTER 173
HB 228-LOCAL - FINAL VERSION

05/22/2025 2165s

2025 SESSION

25-0272
02/08

HOUSE BILL

228-LOCAL

AN ACT relative to petitioned articles at annual or special town meetings.

SPONSORS: Rep. Pauer, Hills. 36; Rep. Burroughs, Carr. 2; Rep. Colcombe, Hills. 30; Rep. Harvey-Bolia, Belk. 3; Rep. W. MacDonald, Rock. 16; Rep. Sellers, Graf. 18; Rep. Veilleux, Hills. 34; Rep. Creighton, Hills. 30; Sen. Avar, Dist 12; Sen. McGough, Dist 11

COMMITTEE: Municipal and County Government

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill authorizes written applications for a petitioned article at an annual or special town or school board meeting to identify a primary petitioner who shall be given a minimum of 10 minutes to introduce their warrant articles.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT relative to petitioned articles at annual or special town meetings.

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

1 173:1 Time for Holding Town Meetings and Warning Thereof; Articles. Amend RSA 39:3 to read as
2 follows:

3 39:3 Articles. Upon the written application of 25 or more registered voters or 2 percent of the
4 registered voters in town, whichever is less, although in no event shall fewer than 10 registered voters be
5 sufficient, presented to the selectmen or one of them not later than the fifth Tuesday before the day
6 prescribed for an annual meeting, the selectmen shall insert in their warrant for such meeting the
7 petitioned article with only such minor textual changes as may be required. Such corrections shall not in
8 any way change the intended effect of the article as presented in the original language of the petition. For
9 the purposes of this section, the number of registered voters in a town shall be the number of voters
10 registered prior to the last state general election. The right to have an article inserted in the warrant
11 conferred by this section shall not be invalidated by the provisions of RSA 32. In towns with fewer than
12 10,000 inhabitants upon the written application of 50 or more voters or 1/4 of the voters in town, whichever
13 is fewer, and in towns with 10,000 or more inhabitants upon the written application of 5 percent of the
14 registered voters in the town, so presented not less than 60 days before the next annual meeting, the
15 selectmen shall warn a special meeting to act upon any question specified in such application. The
16 checklist for an annual or special town meeting shall be corrected by the supervisors of the checklist as
17 provided in RSA 654:25-31. Those persons qualified to vote whose names are on the corrected checklist
18 shall be entitled to vote at the meeting. The same checklist used at a recessed town meeting shall be
19 used at any reconvened session of the same town meeting. In no event shall a special town meeting be
20 held on the biennial election day. ***The written application for a petitioned article for an annual or special***
21 ***meeting may identify one of the registered voters on the application as the primary petitioner. If no***
22 ***primary petitioner is identified, the primary petitioner shall be the first registered voter listed on the written***
23 ***application.***

24 173:2 School Meetings; Special. Amend RSA 197:2 to read as follows:

25 197:2 Special. A special meeting of a school district shall be held whenever, in the opinion of the
26 school board, there is occasion therefor, or whenever 50 or more voters, or 1/4 of the voters of the district,
27 whichever is less, shall have made written application to the school board therefor, setting forth the
28 subject matter upon which action is desired. No special school district meeting shall be held in
29 conjunction with the biennial election, except when a special school district meeting has been approved
30 by the court and a school district has adopted the official ballot referendum form of meeting pursuant to
31 RSA 40:14. ***The written application for a petitioned article for a special meeting may identify one of the***

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1 *registered voters in the application as the primary petitioner. If no primary petitioner is identified, the*
2 *primary petitioner shall be the first registered voter listed on the written application.*

3 173:3 School Meetings; Warrant and Articles. Amend RSA 197:6 to read as follows:

4 197:6 Warrant and Articles. Upon the written application of 25 or more voters or 2 percent of the
5 voters of the school district, whichever is less, although in no event shall fewer than 10 registered voters
6 be sufficient, presented to the school board or one of them not later than 30 days before the date
7 prescribed for the school district meeting or the second Tuesday in March, whichever is earlier, the school
8 board shall insert in the school district warrant for such meeting the petitioned article with only such minor
9 textual changes as may be required. No article may be inserted after posting of said warrant. Corrections
10 to petitioned warrant articles shall not in any way change the intended effect of the article as presented in
11 the original petition. The right to have an article inserted in the warrant conferred by this section shall not
12 be invalidated by the provisions of RSA 32. *The written application for a petitioned article for an annual*
13 *meeting may identify one of the registered voters in the application as the primary petitioner. If no primary*
14 *petitioner is identified, the primary petitioner shall be the first registered voter listed on the written*
15 *application.*

16 173:4 Government of Town Meeting; Debate. Amend RSA 40:7 to read as follows:

17 40:7 Debate. No person shall speak in any meeting without leave of the moderator, nor when any
18 person speaking is in order; and all persons shall be silent at the desire of the moderator, on pain of
19 forfeiting \$1 for each offense, for the use of the town. *The moderator shall provide a primary petitioner,*
20 *identified pursuant to RSA 39:3, RSA 197:2, or RSA 197:6, the opportunity to introduce the petitioned*
21 *article at the meeting. The primary petitioner shall be given a minimum of 10 minutes to introduce the*
22 *warrant article at the meeting. Upon written notice to the moderator, the primary petitioner may designate*
23 *any registered voter to act as the primary petitioner of a petitioned article.*

173:5 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

Approved: July 15, 2025

Effective Date: September 13, 2025