

Rep. Pauer, Hills. 36  
Rep. J. MacDonald, Carr. 6  
Rep. Wherry, Hills. 13  
May 1, 2026  
2026-1797h  
07/08

Amendment to SB 653

1 Amend the title of the bill by replacing it with the following:

2

3 AN ACT enabling counties to change the dates of their biennial budgets and relative to the  
4 adopting of a municipal budget committee and electing members thereof.

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6 Amend the bill by replacing all after the enacting clause with the following:

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8 1 Municipal Budget Law; Budget Committee. RSA 32:14, III is repealed and reenacted to read  
9 as follows:

10 III. Voting shall be by official ballot unless the town has not adopted the official ballot, in  
11 which case the clerk shall cause the same question to be printed upon special ballots, which shall be  
12 used to determine the vote of the town at the annual meeting, and ballots shall be accepted by the  
13 moderator for a period of not less than one hour following the completion of discussion on the  
14 question.

15 (a) If budget committee members-at-large are to be appointed by the moderator  
16 pursuant to RSA 32:15, II, the wording of the question shall be: "To assist voters in the prudent  
17 appropriation of public funds, shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a budget  
18 committee consisting of (number) members-at-large who are appointed by the moderator?"

19 (b) If budget committee members-at-large are to be elected with initial members-at-large  
20 appointed to one year terms by the moderator pursuant to RSA 32:15, III, the wording of the  
21 question shall be: "To assist voters in the prudent appropriation of public funds, shall we adopt the  
22 provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a budget committee consisting of (number) members-at-large  
23 who are elected, with the initial members appointed to one-year terms by the moderator?"

24 (c) Except for a town or district that uses an official ballot form of meeting under RSA  
25 40:13 or under a charter adopted pursuant to RSA 49-D, if budget committee members-at-large are  
26 to be elected with initial members-at-large elected to one-year terms pursuant to RSA 32:15, III, the  
27 wording of the question shall be as follows: "To assist voters in the prudent appropriation of public  
28 funds, shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a budget committee consisting of  
29 (number) members-at-large who are elected, with the initial members elected to one-year terms by  
30 the meeting?"

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1 (d) For a town or district that uses an official ballot form of meeting under RSA 40:13 or  
2 under a charter adopted pursuant to RSA 49-D, if budget committee members-at-large are to be  
3 elected with initial members-at-large elected to staggered terms at the next annual meeting  
4 pursuant to RSA 32:15, III, the wording of the question shall be as follows: "To assist voters in the  
5 prudent appropriation of public funds, shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a  
6 budget committee consisting of (number) members-at-large who are elected, with initial members  
7 elected at the next annual meeting?"

8 2 Municipal Budget Law; Adoption. Amend RSA 32:14, V to read as follows:

9 V. A town or district which has adopted this subdivision may rescind its adoption in the  
10 manner described in paragraphs II and III, *except that the wording of the question shall be:*  
11 *"Shall we rescind the provisions of RSA 32:14, eliminating the budget committee so that the*  
12 *governing body assumes all budgetary responsibilities for the prudent appropriation of*  
13 *public funds?"*.

14 3 Municipal Budget Law; Budget Committee Membership. Amend RSA 32:15, III-IV to read as  
15 follows:

16 III. *If a town or district uses an official ballot form of meeting under RSA 40:13 or*  
17 *under a charter adopted pursuant to RSA 49-D, and the meeting decides members-at-large*  
18 *are to be elected, the meeting shall either elect the initial members-at-large for staggered*  
19 *terms as described in paragraph II at the next annual meeting, or shall authorize the*  
20 *moderator to appoint members-at-large to serve a one-year term until the next annual*  
21 *meeting, as provided in RSA 669:17. Otherwise, if the meeting decides members-at-large are to*  
22 *be elected, the meeting shall either elect the initial members for one-year terms by means other than*  
23 *by official ballot, or shall authorize the moderator to appoint members to serve until the next annual*  
24 *meeting, as provided in RSA 669:17. Elections for staggered terms, as described in paragraph II,*  
25 *shall not begin until that next annual meeting, and shall be by official ballot if the municipality has*  
26 *adopted the official ballot system, as set forth in RSA 669 or RSA 671. A budget committee shall*  
27 *be deemed duly constituted and able to conduct business once a quorum of its elected or*  
28 *appointed members-at-large have been sworn into office.*

29 IV. A town or district which has adopted this subdivision may vote at any subsequent  
30 annual meeting to change the number or manner of selection of its members-at-large. No such  
31 change shall take effect until the annual meeting following the meeting at which the change was  
32 adopted. *Currently elected or appointed members-at-large shall continue to serve until the*  
33 *end of their current term.*

34 (a) *To change the number of members-at-large, the wording of the question*  
35 *shall be: "Shall we change the number of budget committee members-at-large from*  
36 *(number) to (number)?"*

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1           ***(b) To change the manner of selection of members-at-large, the wording of the***  
2 ***question shall be: “Shall we change the manner of selection of budget committee members-***  
3 ***at-large from (“appointed by moderator” or “elected by voters”) to (“elected by voters” or***  
4 ***“appointed by moderator”)?”***

5           4 Cooperative School Districts; Budget Committee. Amend RSA 195:12-a, I to read as follows:

6           I. A cooperative school district at an annual meeting, under a proper article in the warrant,  
7 may vote to establish a budget committee pursuant to RSA 32:14 and may rescind such action in a  
8 like manner. The budget committee shall have the same number of members as the cooperative  
9 district school board plus one additional member from the school board as provided in this  
10 paragraph. The terms of office and manner of election of members shall be determined in the same  
11 manner as for the cooperative school board. Whenever it is voted to establish a budget committee,  
12 the moderator in the first instance shall appoint the members of the budget committee, except for  
13 the additional member appointed from the school board, within ~~[15]~~ **30** days of the vote establishing  
14 the committee. The members appointed by the moderator shall serve until the next annual meeting  
15 when the meeting shall elect their successors. No member of the cooperative school board shall be  
16 appointed or elected to the budget committee except that the chairperson of the cooperative school  
17 board shall appoint a member of the board to serve on the budget committee in an ex-officio, non-  
18 voting capacity. After appointment or election, the budget committee shall promptly organize and  
19 choose a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. The secretary shall keep records of the  
20 proceedings of the budget committee, which shall be public records open to public inspection.

21           5 New Section; Municipal Budget Law; Biennial Budgets; Procedure for Fiscal Year Change.  
22 Amend RSA 32 by inserting after section 26 the following new section:

23           32:27 Procedure for Fiscal Year Change.

24           I. Upon an affirmative vote of a majority of county voters, a county may move the biennial  
25 budget to the off year of the state election. Putting the question on the ballot shall require a vote in  
26 the affirmative by a majority of the county commissioners. Said vote shall happen no later than the  
27 September 1 before the state elections.

28           II. Notice of a vote of the county commissioners pursuant to paragraph I shall be given at  
29 least 15 days, but not more than 60 days, prior, by a local newspaper of general circulation, public  
30 notice on the county's main website or any social media accounts utilized by the county, and public  
31 notice posted in the 2 places where the county regularly posts notices of its governing body meetings,  
32 or by any other means deemed appropriate by the county commissioners.

33           III. The question shall be put to the voters at the November state election and shall read as  
34 follows:

35 "Shall NAME OF COUNTY move to a biennial budget cycle starting in the year YEAR NUMBER?"

36           6 Repeal. RSA 32:14, IV, relative to procedure if the vote is favorable, is repealed.

37           7 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

2026-1797h

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill:

- I. Modifies the procedure for adopting, rescinding, and electing a municipal budget committee.
- II. Modifies the time frame for the appointment of initial members of a cooperative school district budget committee.
- III. Enables counties to change the dates of their biennial budgets.