

HB 228-LOCAL - AS INTRODUCED

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. Avard, Dist 12; Sen. McGough, Dist 11

COMMITTEE: Municipal and County Government

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 granted the same amount of time to introduce a petitioned article as is granted to the governing body or budget committee 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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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

25 2 School Meetings; Special. Amend RSA 197:2 to read as follows:

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

1 meeting pursuant to RSA 40:14. ***The written application for a petitioned article for a special***
2 ***meeting may identify one of the registered voters in the application as the primary***
3 ***petitioner. If no primary petitioner is identified, the primary petitioner shall be the first***
4 ***registered voter listed on the written application.***

5 3 School Meetings; Warrant and Articles. Amend RSA 197:6 to read as follows:

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

19 4 Government of Town Meeting; Debate. Amend RSA 40:7 to read as follows:

20 40:7 Debate. No person shall speak in any meeting without leave of the moderator, nor when
21 any person speaking is in order; and all persons shall be silent at the desire of the moderator, on
22 pain of forfeiting \$1 for each offense, for the use of the town. ***The moderator shall provide a***
23 ***primary petitioner, identified pursuant to RSA 39:3, RSA 197:2, or RSA 197:6, the***
24 ***opportunity to introduce the petitioned article at the meeting. The primary petitioner***
25 ***shall be given the same amount of time equal to the longest amount of time granted to the***
26 ***governing body or budget committee to introduce any warrant article at the meeting. Upon***
27 ***written notice to the moderator, the primary petitioner may designate any registered voter***
28 ***to act as the primary petitioner of a petitioned article.***

29 5 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.