



February 18, 2025

Chairman Berry

House Committee on Election Law

Subject: Testimony in Opposition of New Hampshire House Bill 317

Dear Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in Opposition of HB 317. For the record, my name is Krysten Evans and I am the Director of Policy for ABLE NH. ABLE is a disability justice organization and we are a non partisan, non profit organization that fights for the civil and human rights of children and adults with disabilities.

I am here today to testify in strong opposition to HB 317, which imposes stricter voter identification requirements by prohibiting supervisors of the checklist from verifying a voter's identity without official documentation, regardless of their personal knowledge of the voter.

This bill presents a significant barrier to voting access, particularly for individuals with disabilities. According to the National Council on Disability, strict voter ID laws disproportionately impact disabled voters, many of whom face significant obstacles in obtaining and maintaining government-issued identification due to mobility limitations, financial barriers, and bureaucratic hurdles (National Council on Disability, 2021).

In New Hampshire, individuals with disabilities often rely on public transportation or caregivers to access government offices. The state has limited DMV locations, making it more difficult for rural residents and those with mobility impairments to secure valid photo identification (Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 2018). Studies show that people with disabilities are twice as likely as non-disabled people to experience challenges in obtaining identification (Schur & Kruse, 2020). This law would disproportionately disenfranchise these voters, violating the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Help America Vote Act.

Current voter ID laws in New Hampshire already include safeguards to ensure election security. Repealing the provision that allows election officials to verify a voter's identity based on personal knowledge is unnecessary and will likely lead to eligible voters being disenfranchised. In 2020, the Government Accountability Office found that states with

strict voter ID laws saw a measurable decrease in voter turnout among marginalized communities, particularly among people with disabilities and older adults (GAO, 2019). The Brennan Center for Justice reports that voter fraud is extremely rare, with incidents occurring at a rate of 0.0003% to 0.0025% (Brennan Center for Justice, 2017). Given this data, HB 317 addresses a nonexistent problem at the expense of voters who already face systemic barriers.

HB 317 creates an unnecessary hardship for voters with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals without providing any substantive benefits to election integrity. The legislation contradicts federal voting rights protections and places undue burdens on those least able to overcome them. I urge this committee to oppose HB 317 to ensure that all Granite Staters, regardless of disability status, have equal and fair access to the ballot.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Krysten Evans

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Sources:

Bazon Center for Mental Health Law. “Barriers to Voter Access for People with Mental Disabilities.” Bazon.org, 2018, www.bazon.org/voting-rights.

Brennan Center for Justice. “The Truth About Voter Fraud.” Brennan Center for Justice, 2017, www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/truth-about-voter-fraud.

Government Accountability Office (GAO). “Elections: Issues Related to State Voter Identification Laws.” GAO.gov, 2019, www.gao.gov/products/gao-19-485.

National Council on Disability. “Voter Accessibility for People with Disabilities