



January 20, 2026

Chairman Berry
House Election Law Committee
Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 1600

Dear Honorable Chair and members of the committee,

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 fight for the civil and human rights of people with disabilities in NH. I am here today in strong support of House Bill 1600.

People with disabilities are routinely excluded from civic participation, not because they are disengaged, but because our systems are designed in ways that make participation harder or, at times, impossible. Voting is one of the clearest examples. For many people with disabilities, registering to vote requires navigating multiple offices, transportation barriers, inaccessible information, and strict deadlines, all of which compound into a single outcome: eligible voters are left out.

House Bill 1600 addresses this inequity in a clear and practical way. It allows voter registration to occur at the Division of Motor Vehicles at the time of license or identification card application or renewal. This is a moment when identity, age, citizenship, and residency are already being verified. It is an existing point of access, and this bill uses it wisely.

The data is clear. The U.S. Census Bureau consistently finds that people with disabilities vote at lower rates than nondisabled voters, with registration barriers cited as a primary reason. When systems require additional steps or separate processes, people who rely on caregivers, who cannot drive, or who experience chronic illness or cognitive fatigue are disproportionately impacted.

This approach is proven. The National Voter Registration Act was created to reduce barriers for people with disabilities, low-income voters, and others historically excluded from the electoral process. Research from the Brennan Center for Justice shows that states that effectively implement motor voter registration see increased registration and participation without compromising election integrity.

From a disability justice perspective, this bill is about fairness and dignity. Too often, people with disabilities are expected to overcome barriers that were never necessary in the first place. When access depends on persistence, time, or physical capacity, the system is not neutral. It is exclusionary.

Concerns about administrative cost should be viewed in context. Exclusion has a cost as well. When people with disabilities are absent from the ballot box, policies are made without their lived experiences shaping them. This results in long-term consequences across housing, health care, transportation, and public services. Inclusive civic participation strengthens outcomes and reduces downstream harm.

House Bill 1600 does not compel anyone to register. It simply ensures that eligible voters are given a meaningful opportunity to do so. That opportunity is what transforms a right on paper into a right in practice.

A democracy that only works for those who face the fewest barriers is not truly representative. House Bill 1600 is a modest change with a profound impact. It affirms that people with disabilities belong fully in our civic life and deserve systems designed with access in mind.

I urge the committee to support House Bill 1600. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



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Sources

U.S. Census Bureau. Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2020. Disability and Voting Statistics.

Brennan Center for Justice. Increasing Voter Registration Through Motor Voter Programs.

National Council on Disability. The State of Voting Access for People with Disabilities.

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. Voting Rights and the Americans with Disabilities Act.