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2/10/2026

Dear Members of the House Election Law Committee,

My name is Ryan Donnelly. I'm a Policy Analyst with Granite State Independent Living. GSIL is a state-wide non-profit organization that advocates and provides services for older adults and people with disabilities like me who wish to remain independent in their homes and communities. I'm writing to you today in support of HB1277, which would allow individuals to write in their driver's license number or non-driver's identification number to satisfy the proof-of-identity requirement when applying for an absentee ballot.

This will be a positive change that will make it easier for people with disabilities to exercise their right to vote without diminishing the integrity of our elections. Recent changes to election law in our state currently require individuals applying for an absentee ballot to submit proof of their identity, either by including a printed copy of their photo ID, getting their application notarized, or presenting their ID in person if applying directly at their town or city hall. All of the above can present challenges, particularly for people with disabilities whose circumstances may make accessing their community difficult.

HB1277 will sidestep this by providing an option for voters to simply write in the valid number of their state-issued driver's license or non-driver's identification card, a number that can easily be checked by the town or city clerk to confirm its authenticity. This common-sense addition means that folks will no longer have to worry about figuring out how to get their application notarized, finding a way to get to town hall when it is open, or looking for a place to get a copy of their ID printed if someone lacks a home printer of their own.

I am all for any changes that reduce barriers to voting without compromising the integrity of our elections. The right to vote is the bedrock of our democracy, and it is vitally important that all citizens who are eligible to exercise that right can do so without undue burden. With the above in mind, I hope the members of this committee will choose to support HB1277. Thank you for the opportunity to deliver my testimony to you, and for all the hard work you perform on behalf of all New Hampshire citizens.

Sincerely,

Ryan J. Donnelly
Policy Analyst