

Changes to Election Laws in 2025

A Guide for Municipalities



August 2025

Summary of Changes Pursuant to HB 67

HB 67 makes the pilot program that required municipalities to enter into pilot agreements with the Secretary of State (“SOS”) for the mandatory use of Accessible Voting Systems at local elections permanent starting on January 1, 2026. Accessible Voting Systems (“AVS”) are required to be used at all state and federal elections under the Helping Americans Vote Act; now, under the new law, they also must be used at local elections. The SOS purchased and maintains AVS for every polling site in the state. AVS are designed to assist voters who are blind, visually impaired, or have other disabilities that make traditional voting methods difficult. AVS provides voters with disabilities with equal access to the election process, including voting privately and independently.

As previously required by the pilot program, HB 67 obligates any city, town, or school district that uses an official ballot system to ensure that each polling place is equipped with at least one accessible voting system. Municipalities must enter into agreements with the SOS’s office to use the AVS for local elections. The permanent agreement will again include the requirement that the municipality cover the cost of programming the AVS (for local elections only); store and maintain the AVS in accordance with state-issued election security standards; and follow any guidance issued by the NH SOS relative to AVS programming and election-day setup.

The Secretary of State’s office has issued a Request for Proposal for AVS. The SOS has also indicated that new AVS equipment and associated agreements outlined in HB 67 will be delivered via the SOS in early 2026.

Effective Dates: Section 2 effective June 29, 2025 (which extends the pilot program to December 31, 2025), and remainder effective January 1, 2026

Statute Amended: RSA 659:20-b

Summary of Changes Pursuant to HB 151

HB 151 creates a local option that would allow the “city or town’s legislative body” to adopt 3-year terms for supervisors of the checklist. If the legislative body chooses to adopt this option, it would not affect the terms of supervisors of the checklist currently in office.

Effective Date: September 13, 2025

Statute Amended: RSA 41:46-a

Summary of Changes Pursuant to HB 154

HB 154 allows any voter to request their ballot to be hand-counted. To do so, the voter must make the request and hand their ballot to the election official staffing the ballot machine, who will place it in the auxiliary compartment of the ballot counting device for hand-counting at the close of the polls.

Effective Date: September 30, 2025

Statute Adopted: RSA 656:42, XII

Summary of Changes Pursuant to HB 294

HB 294 repeals the ability of voters to postpone the processing of absentee ballots until after the polls are closed. Moderators or their designee must still announce when polls open and post, at the polling location and one other place, the time at which the processing of absentee ballots shall begin.

Effective Date: July 28, 2025

Statute Amended: RSA 659:49, II

Summary of Changes Pursuant to HB 327

HB 327 amends the statute to allow a state representative to file for office either with the town/city clerk as outlined in RSA 655:15, II and III or the secretary of state.

Additionally, the law authorizes a town clerk or a deputy town clerk to witness a candidate's affidavit whether or not that person is a notary as long as the candidate is filing in person.

Effective Date: July 28, 2025

Statute Amended: RSA 655:15, II and III; RSA 655:28

Summary of Changes Pursuant to HB 474

HB 474 amends RSA 659:64-a and requires there to be a second witness to the counting of write-in votes. The second witness must be a sworn-in election official.

Effective Date: August 1, 2025

Statute Amended: RSA 659:64-a, I

Summary of Changes Pursuant to SB 16

SB 16 adds a new requirement that the city or town clerk must post copies of the election return forms submitted to the secretary of state's office pursuant to RSA 659:73, I within 7 days of an election. The copies must be posted in two places that can include locations which are regularly used to post notice of the meetings of its governing body, the municipality's main website, or any social media accounts used by the municipality.

Effective Date: August 9, 2025

Statute Adopted: RSA 659:73, VII

Summary of Changes Pursuant to SB 43

SB 43 amends two statutes.

SB 43 amends RSA 652:27, I to authorize cities and towns to use poll books for voter registration and check-in for not only elections but also for business meetings, deliberative sessions, and special meetings for both the town and school district.

SB 43 also amends RSA 652:16-h relative to Electioneering; Wearing of Clothing. The definition of clothing under the statute is maintained as clothing or paraphernalia displaying a candidate's name, likeness, or logo, a ballot measure's number, title, subject, or logo, a political party's name or logo, or any communication that a reasonable person would believe explicitly advocates for or against any candidate, political party, or measure. The legislation clarifies that a person who is eligible to vote or register to vote must reasonably attempt to remove or cover such clothing or paraphernalia but if they are unable to do so, may wear such clothing in the polling place while actively and expeditiously engaged in the process of registering to vote or while actively and expeditiously engaged in the process of voting. NHMA suggests that the municipality contact the secretary of state's office or department of justice for guidance on the enforcement of this statutory change.

Effective Date: September 13, 2025

Statutes Amended: RSA 652:16-h, I; RSA 652:27, I

Summary of Changes Pursuant to SB 221

SB 221 amends the timing of verification of the checklist from every 10 years to annually. Annual verification will begin in 2026. Additionally, SB 221 amends the look back period to determine whether a person shall be deemed reregistered from 4 years to 5 years. This means a person will be deemed reregistered if that person voted in any election within 5 years immediately preceding the annual verification. Further, the secretary of state's office has been tasked with creating a reregistration form for eligible voters removed from the checklist during annual verification.

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Statutes Amended: RSA 654:39

Additional Guidance for Election Laws Changes:

NHMA follows but does not take a position on voter access legislation. Guidance on bills related to voter access will be issued by the Secretary of State's office.

Legislation that falls into this category is:

HB 261 – relative to election audits.

HB 269 - relative to the date for correction of the voter checklist.

HB 270 - requiring the preservation of electronic ballot counting device external storage devices.

HB 288 - limiting how far in advance of an election an absentee ballot may be requested.

HB 464 – prohibiting certain candidates for political office from participating in counting ballots, enabling the use of certain personal information for determining voter eligibility, and relative to the reporting of low value campaign donations.

HB 626 - directing the secretary of state to implement a vulnerability disclosure program for certain election systems.

[SB 212](#) - changing references from "votes" to "ballots" in the laws regarding elections.

[SB 215](#) - establishing voting procedures for electing town officers in unorganized towns or places.

[SB 218](#) - relative to absentee ballots.