

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee
Tricia Melillo 271-3077

SB 70-FN, relative to the establishment of an election information portal.

Hearing Date: January 24, 2023

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Gray, Murphy, Abbas, Soucy and Perkins Kwoka

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill directs the secretary of state to establish an election information portal.

Sponsors:

Sen. Gray

Sen. Murphy

Who supports the bill: 178 people signed in support of the bill (sign in sheet will be provided upon request to the Committee Aide)

Who opposes the bill: 2 people signed in opposed to the bill. (sign in sheet will be provided upon request to the Committee Aide)

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Gray

- This bill has been on the docket a few times in the recent past.
- It is a way for residents to get their information into the system and have it go directly to their town or city officials.
- In the future he would like to see a process where people could have an app on their phone that allows them to update their information.
- It is limited in scope and the fiscal note speaks to having two people to administer the program.
- Having this portal will reduce lines on election day and support the town officials that have to verify information.
- Senator Soucy asked if Senator Gray would believe that she wanted to be a cosponsor on this bill and thought she has signed off on it.
 - Senator Gray replied that he would believe that.

David Scanlan – Secretary of State

- His office is replacing the Legacy Voter Data Base this year.
- The new data base will allow a lot more functionality and can do what this bill is proposing.
- This is a system that will be able to grow as time goes on and the need arises.

Beth Cotton

- She did a little research and found that many states have implemented this system successfully.
- It provides a readily available resource for many people that cannot physically make it to their towns offices.
- It also provides significant relief for town officers and clerks that will no longer need to track down erroneous information.
- It is estimated that the cost over a 4-year period to municipalities was \$10 million dollars in tracking bad information and processing paper forms.
- Having this portal will cost a lot less than that.

McKenzie St. Germaine

- Many voters are used to taking care of everything online.
- The ease of doing this online will reduce lines at the polling station.
- This portal will also help keep the voter rolls clean.
- It will support the Supervisors of the Checklist and Clerks that oftentimes have difficulty reading the handwritten forms.
- Over 40 states and the District of Columbia are now using an online system.

Olivia Zink – Open Democracy

- She thanked the committee for all the hard work that has been done on this bill and the many others aimed at making voting easier.
- Many voters she has spoken to feel that creating this simple modernization will create confidence in our elections.
- She gave an example of a voter that was not on the checklist because the Supervisor of the Checklist could not read the persons handwriting.
- An online voter portal has the potential to save NH millions of dollars each election by replacing costly paper-based registration forms.
- She believes the election procedure manual states that registrations must have wet signature and that may need to be updated.
- Senator Gray asked if that is what it says in statute.
 - Ms. Zink replied that she thinks it is only in the election procedure manual not in statute.

Louise Spencer - Kent Street Coalition

- She wanted to emphasize that Supervisors of the Checklist spend many hours trying to decipher the handwriting on registration forms.
- She believes this system will help all the poll workers and voters during elections.

Yoely Santana

- She believes this bill will make the election process more accessible to all voters.
- It will increase voters on election day.
- Most people do everything online and would be comfortable using this portal.
- NH should move forward with technology and advancement when it comes to elections.