

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

Kevin Condict 271-3469

HB 72, relative to the tenure of public librarians.

Hearing Date: March 21, 2023

Time Opened: 9:45 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:53 a.m.

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

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill authorizes a municipality's board of library trustees to appoint librarians for a set term.

Sponsors:
Rep. C. Harvey

Who supports the bill: Representative Cathryn Harvey and Teresa Rosenberger.

Who opposes the bill: None.

Who is neutral on the bill: None

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Cathryn Harvey

- HB 72 amends RSA 202a:15, concerning the qualifications and tenure for library directors.
- HB 72 would remove part of the current statute requiring a successor to be appointed and qualified prior to the end of a library director's tenure.
- Her small community has had three different library directors in the last five years.
- The town has found it almost impossible to find an interim director, so this is a work around.
- The town intends to honor the contracts of their library director, but amending the statute will allow for flexibility if the director leaves.
- The bill is supported by the New Hampshire Library Trustee Association (NHLTA) and the State Librarian.
- Senator Gray pointed out that the language of HB 72 is standard. He asked if there was a way for small towns to

- appoint someone for a short time in the interim.
 - Rep. Harvey stated that her town had tried that, but the town is too small and could not afford to match the salary people were asking for. She explained that interim library directors are needed for extended periods of time, and that her town had gone as long as a year without one until they found a qualified candidate. She stated that her town is not willing to lower their qualification standards.
- Senator Gray asked about the language which has been stricken from HB 72 and the use of the word may versus shall.
 - Rep. Harvey explained that the bill was amended because the House Committee, the NHLTA, and the State Librarian did not like the use of the word “or” in the as introduced version of HB 72.
- Senator Gray asked if she was opposed to an amendment that would insert “may serve until the successor is appointed...”.
 - Rep. Harvey replied that she would not be opposed to that.

KC

Date Hearing Report completed: March 22, 2023