

# Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

## *Tricia Melillo 271-3077*

**HB 291**, relative to public inspection of absentee ballot lists.

**Hearing Date:** May 17, 2021

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Gray, Birdsell, Ward, Soucy and Perkins Kwoka

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill requires that town and city clerks shall make absentee ballot voter lists available for public inspection.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. Hill

Rep. Silber

Rep. Rice

Rep. Rouillard

Rep. Pearl

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**Who supports the bill:** Rep. Greg Hill, John Garrison, Alvin See

**Who opposes the bill:** Rep. Joan Hamblet, Rep. Julie Gilman, Rep. Christy Bartlett, Rep. Lucius Parshall, Rep. Susan Almy, Rep. Heidi Hamer, Rep. Cecilia Rich, Rep. Deb Stevens, Rep. Roger Dontonville, Rep. Lee Oxenham, Robin Vogt, Mary Kelley, Anne Dontonville, Gary Hamer, Robbie Hinkel, Dawna Pidgeon, Kathy Tucker, Susan Richman, James Verschueren

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Representative Greg Hill**

- The history of this bill begins back in 2016 with concerns about the validity of absentee ballots.
- If someone wanted to commit election fraud they would do it with absentee ballots.
- There is no difficulty in getting the names of a large number of people that are on the checklist but do not intend to vote in the election.
- His concern is how to identify if something like that had taken place.
- He was given a list of out of state addresses where absentee ballots were mailed.
- The problem occurs when there are multiple ballots going to one address and there is no way to determine if that is for a valid reason.
- Some are explainable, like college kids in a dorm, or snow birds all going to the same address in Florida, and others are not.
- In the last election 14 or 15 ballots went to an expensive high rise apartment building in Boston with no evident explanation.
- Ten percent of the ballots that were sent out of New Hampshire were sent to common addresses.

- This bill will provide transparency to the process by allowing public inspection of the absentee voter list 60 days after the election with a court order.
- Additionally, the Secretary of State will create a report detailing the number of absentee ballots and where they were sent.
- This will provide for an easier determination if further investigation is needed.
- Senator Birdsell asked if he knows if the Boston address was a campus address.
  - Representative Hill replied that the situation in Boston did not appear to be a normal dorm arrangement. It was an expensive high rise building. It was not proof of anything just an indication for further investigation.
- Senator Gray commented that the Committee is working on HB 326 which also has to do with absentee voters and asked if amending RSA 657:15 would get him what he wanted in this bill.
  - Representative Hill replied that he thinks it would but it would be easier and cleaner if all they did was allow the Secretary of State to have access to this information and create the report.

**Summary of testimony presented in opposition:** None

TJM

Date Hearing Report completed: May 21, 2021