



NH SENATE PRESS RELEASE

June 29, 2020

Contact Name: Sara Persechino

Phone: (603) 271-3479

Email: Sara.Persechino@leg.state.nh.us

Senate Passes Bipartisan Package of Initiatives to Ensure Election Accessibility During COVID-19 State of Emergency

CONCORD - Today, the Senate passed HB 1266 in a vote of 24-0. As amended, HB 1266 makes temporary modifications to the absentee voter registration, absentee ballot application, and absentee voting processes in response to the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) disease. The bill next goes to the House of Representatives for a concurrence vote.

After the vote, Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Chair Melanie Levesque (D-Brookline) and Vice Chair Tom Sherman (D-Rye) issued the following statements:

“As we approach September’s state primary elections, we must make changes to our election process that expand accessibility while keeping public health and safety at the forefront,” stated **Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Chair Melanie Levesque (D-Brookline)**. “No one should be forced to choose between their health and their right to vote. In HB 1266, we take necessary action to ensure that no eligible voter is prevented from participating in free and fair elections due to fear.”

Vice Chair Tom Sherman (D-Rye) added, “While we continue our work towards long term enhancements to New Hampshire’s election system, as we confront the Covid-19 pandemic, these short term 2020 only measures must be put in place to ensure that every eligible voter can participate safely in the 2020 state primary and general elections. The measures outlined in HB 1266 were based on recommendations made by the Secretary of State’s Select Committee on 2020 Emergency Election Support, on which I served, including changes to absentee voter registration, absentee ballot application, and absentee voting processes. These temporary measures are essential as we continue New Hampshire’s proud tradition of the highest level of NH participation in the election process.”

###