



NH SENATE PRESS RELEASE

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Bipartisan Legislation to Ensure Election Accessibility During COVID-19 State of Emergency Heading to Governor's Desk

CONCORD - Today, HB 1266, a bipartisan package of initiatives to ensure election accessibility during the COVID-19 state of emergency was delivered to the Secretary of State. 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. It next goes to the governor's desk where he will have five business days to sign, veto, or allow the bill to become law without his signature.

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Chair Melanie Levesque (D-Brookline) and Senator Tom Sherman (D-Rye) issued the following statements in response:

"No one should be forced to choose between their health and their right to vote," stated **Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Chair Melanie Levesque (D-Brookline)**. "Absentee ballots are a secure way to enable participation while protecting public health and access must be expanded. A voter should not have to claim disability in order to protect themselves. HB 1266 takes necessary action to ensure this September and November, no eligible voter is prevented from participating in free and fair elections due to fear of COVID-19."

Vice Chair Tom Sherman (D-Rye) added, "The temporary measures taken in HB 1266 as amended were developed directly out of the recommendations made by the Secretary of State's Select Committee on 2020 Emergency Election Support including changes to the absentee voter registration, absentee ballot application, and absentee voting processes. While we will continue to seek long term improvements to secure and modernize New Hampshire's election system, these short term, 2020 only measures will help ensure that every eligible voter can participate safely in the 2020 state primary and general elections. I urge the governor to sign HB 1266 into law and support New Hampshire's proud tradition of engaged participation in the election process."