



As we look ahead to next week, we're preparing for the [House Session on Thursday, June 5th](#), where two highly restrictive absentee voting bills, SB 287 and SB 213, will be considered. You can find more details and actions on the [Open Democracy Action Team Member Toolkit](#) page.

In the wake of HB 1569, which was passed last year and has already worked to disenfranchise eligible voters during town elections, some legislators want to go even further. Two bills scheduled for discussion during the executive session, **SB 287 and SB 213**, introduce highly restrictive measures for voters seeking to cast absentee ballots in New Hampshire. These proposed laws would create unnecessary and burdensome hurdles that **disproportionately affect the state's most vulnerable populations**, such as the elderly, voters with disabilities, students, low-income individuals, and those serving in the military. **We ask that you [contact your state representative](#) prior to Thursday and urge them to oppose these extreme bills.**

[SB 287](#) requires that voters show photo ID before election day, or submit their application with a notarized signature if they wish for their ballot be mailed to a different address other than that appearing on the official checklist, adding significant financial and logistical barriers. It creates two classes of voters: verified and unverified, with little substantive justification for doing so. During the House Election Law Committees Executive Session on 5/27, the signature matching verification requirement was removed, but the bill was also amended to apply to *everyone* requesting an absentee ballot.

[SB 213](#) requires voters provide proof of identity, U.S. citizenship, age, and domicile when applying for an absentee ballot. It also requires a witness affirmation signed by a Notary Public or Justice of the Peace to confirm the voter's identity, imposing undue burdens that are likely to suppress turnout. In the amended House version, the committee passed a replace-all amendment, inserting their position on absentee voting from [HB 217](#), which was already killed by the full House.

Both bills in their original form rely on signature matching as a fallback if notarization or required documents aren't submitted. **This practice was ruled unconstitutional in [Saucedo v. Gardner \(2018\)](#)**. The Court reasoned that election moderators do not have sufficient training in handwriting analysis to be able to accurately reject an absentee ballot on that basis. Additionally, those with disabilities are far more likely to have fluctuating handwriting.

They also **require notarization and photocopies of sensitive documents**, which pose serious challenges for those without easy access to a notary, copy machine, or printer. If

voters can't meet these demands, they must either make an in-person visit to the town clerk - defeating the purpose of absentee voting - ***or risk rejection based on illegal signature comparisons.***

Voting in New Hampshire has been found to be safe and secure time and again. In 2022, the Secretary of State commissioned [Special Committee on Voter Confidence found no evidence of widespread voter fraud](#). That same year, New Hampshire was also [ranked last on the Cost of Voting Index](#), which measures how difficult it is for eligible voters to cast a ballot based on the availability of factors such as online registration, early voting, voter ID laws, etc. Based on this, it is clear that the legislature is currently heading in the wrong direction when it comes to voting rights and election security.

[Click here to use our pre-drafted email template](#) to voice your concerns to your state representative prior to Thursday, June 5th. We encourage you to personalize your message, as unique emails with personal stories often have a greater impact!

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns, and thank you for standing up for voting access in New Hampshire!

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