

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS—TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **ABSENTEE REGISTRATION**

- * Post forms for easy access on SOS website
- * Consider revisions to the absentee registration application to be “substantially in the same form” as the current on the books, but make this simpler and provide a plain-speaking definition of “disability” that conveys that this should be checked if concerned about COVID-19
- * Encourage early publication of AG’s opinion on topic
- * Consider whether Town Clerks or SOS office should be primarily responsible for sending out Absentee Voter Registration packets since either may do so under RSA 654:16
- * Dissemination of Early Absentee Voter Registration to avoid Same-Day Registration through Association of High School Principals, College and University Council, NH Healthcare Association and Assisted Living Associations, AARP, NH Catholic Charities, ACLU, Disabilities Right Center, and other Advocacy Groups for marginalized citizens; Consider leaving absentee registration forms in grocery stores, libraries, and other places frequented during COVID-19 process
- * Consider educational materials regarding how to complete forms, including bilingual education and simple and straightforward instructions
- * Consider that most do not have computers and printers to download forms; and/or to copy their driver’s license and other materials
- * Consider the use of an affidavit in the same manner that it is allowed on same-day registration in lieu of providing copies of photo id, etc.
- * Provide for multiple days of pre-election registration to vote by town and city clerks in a physical location that will allow for social distancing
- * Attempt to identify and mail applications for registration to every un-registered NH Voter who is eligible to vote

- **ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATIONS**

- * Should we have an “all-absentee ballot” election and eliminate in-person voting?
- * Post forms for access on SOS website and create easily down-loadable forms
- * Consider allowing voters to apply for absentee ballots on-line
- * Consider revisions to absentee ballot application to be “substantially in the same form as the current statute” but make this simpler and provide a plain-speaking definition
- * Mail absentee applications to every single registered voter in NH
- * Provide definition of “disability” that conveys to the voter that this term includes fear for going to the polls because of exposure to COVID-19
- * Allow voters to apply for both Primary and General election absentee ballots through one application
- * Consider allowing for pre-paid postage for sending application and sending absentee ballot
- * Consider using flat 8x11 Envelopes for voters to send in their ballots so as to expedite machine input
- * Make sure that people with disabilities will be able to find an equivalent of the current voting machines for voting from home to assure for a private, independent, and verifiable vote for them; consider UOCAVAH method of voting for people with disabilities
- * Publish AG’s and SOS’ opinion regarding expansion of term, “disability” but provide explanation in simple terms to voters
- * Print simple instructions on how to complete absentee ballot application with FAQ’s;
- * Consider hotline for NH voters who are trying to complete absentee ballot application and/or ballot to help citizens understand terms of completion; provide for time to respond to voters to allow them to correct mistakes on forms, etc.
- * Consider expanding definition of “delivery agent”—who can deliver absentee ballot to include not only direct family members but also “trusted friend or neighbor” for those who do not have family members;

- * Consider secure “drop boxes” at Town Clerk’s Office and perhaps other secure places such as Police and Fire stations for drive-up and delivery of one’s absentee ballot on election day or before election day;
- * Consider drive-through dropping of absentee ballot on Election Day as well as the ability to drive up to poll and request absentee ballot on election day and complete it and drop it off at the Election
- * Allow for multiple days of “early voting” by absentee ballot, in person, with town or city clerks present in a physical location that allows for social distancing and PPE

- **PRE-ELECTION**

- * Consider allowing processing of Absentee Ballots prior to Election Day as long as it can be observed by public in person or via electronic means
- * Consider architectural advice regarding how lay-outs for polling places and how to make them comply with social distancing
- * Consider allowing towns and cities to post the election place but then re-post it if they need to find a larger or more suitable polling place

- **ELECTION DAY**

- * PPE for Election Workers; May Election workers be tested for COVID-19?
- * PPE for Voters: do we require masks, etc.? May voters be tested for temperature or COVID-19 before entering polls?
- * Start processing absentee ballots earlier than 2 hours after the polls open and/or at least open all the outside envelopes so that by 2 hours into the process the inner envelopes may be removed
- * Consider providing for additional machines for hand-count polls and others who need them to cast the absentee ballots
- * Layout for Election Day: How do we provide for Social Distancing if Ballot Clerks must be side by side with two parties represented?

- * Inviting youths from high schools to serve as Ballot Clerks and as other poll workers. and/or to work with more experienced Ballot Clerks and poll workers to allow for seniors to stay at home
- * How to deal with the usual onslaught of Same-Day registration and the up-close and intimate exchange of id's and multiple documents, and how do you check id's when people are wearing masks 6 feet away?
- * Ballot Clerks: how to arrange for voters in masks to present id to ballot clerks at a distance and to be recognized in the mask
- * How to assure for sufficient poll workers when many over 60 (the majority?) may not want to brave the polls on election day
- * Electioneering: should we allow for typical electioneering outside of the poll, i.e. people holding signs and banners and standing close to each other and potential voters, especially in tight polling places?
- * Primary Day return to undeclared after voting: should we simply process returns to undeclared at a later time? Or should we have an automatic return to undeclared?
- * Counting of absentee ballots and votes: Should we consider allowing voting to continue for a day or two after the election and to announce results after that?
- * Should we consider an Emergency Order that allows all absentee ballots that are postmarked as of the day of the Election to be counted so that no voter is disenfranchised because of the working of the US Postal Service?
- * Consider assistance from National Guard on Election Day, perhaps in plain clothes
- * Masks: May we require voters to wear a mask to enter polling place and if they refuse, then what? May we ask voters to remove their masks for id-checking or for photos of those who do not have ids?

- **FUNDING**

- * In addition to the \$3.2M of funds for elections, should \$15M in HAVA funds or other CARE Act funds be tapped to assure a fair and secure election?
- * Allocation: How will the funds be allocated to the municipalities? How will the amount be determined? Will it be pre-granted or require the town to front the cost and be reimbursed?

- * Can we find a streamlined way for town and city clerks to keep track of their “incremental funds” expended for COVID-19 rather than taking huge amounts of record keeping time; for example, can they simply compare last year’s budget for elections with this year’s budget?

- **COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC “PR” REGARDING THE EXPANDED ELECTION PROCEDURES**
 - * How to communicate to the public about expanded rights regarding absentee voting and registration

 - * Consider major ad campaign and billboards with a catchy ad like the Eagle picture

 - * Engage as many interest groups as possible who have testified before our committee or others (League of Women’s Voters, ACLU, NH Healthcare Association, Assisted Living groups, Association of School Principals, etc.) to help us spread the word to their list serves regarding the expanded election procedure

 - * How to communicate to the public about safety at the polling place and any innovations such as drop-boxes and drive-through drop-off of absentee ballots on election day