

The New Hampshire Democracy Report

NH legislation on campaign finance, voting rights, redistricting, and money in politics



Open Democracy Action
Open Democracy Founder Doris "Granny D" Haddock
America's Campaign Finance Reformer
1910-2010

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Conservative author and conservationist Hal Borland said in one of his New York Times columns, "Knowing trees, I understand the meaning of patience. Knowing grass, I can appreciate persistence."

It's a perfect description for Democracy Reform advocates. Returning Democracy to the voters is the long view. We need the persistence of fixing the system one loophole at a time, one legislative session at a time, and change will happen.

To make those changes, our legislators and the public will need to hear from YOU. Please make it your personal mission to write letters to legislators, call legislators, write letters to the editor, and share information via social media. PERSISTENCE will overcome those powers who want to keep the corruption benefiting them.

In this first 2020 New Hampshire Democracy Report, we'll summarize the Open Democracy Action legislative priorities, and bring you up to day on the first three weeks of the session. NHDR will typically be weekly, but is driven by the legislative calendar. If you do not wish to stay informed on Democracy legislation in the NH State House, please [click here](#), uncheck "New Hampshire Democracy Report," and untag yourself from receiving this email.

Otherwise, thanks for your commitment to a more honest and responsive government for New Hampshire!



"Persistence can change failure into extraordinary achievement."

Matt Biondi, 11-time Olympic medal winner.

2020 Priority Democracy Reform Bills

Here's a roundup of the Democracy Reform bills we're following this term, and where they are in the process for the 2020 half of the 2019-2020 legislative term. Some of them are tweaked reruns of past reform bills shot down by legislators who think our money-influenced system is just fine the way it is. Other bills, like our pay-to-play legislation is a new challenge to money interests, trying to keep corporations from giving donations in return for favorable votes on state contracts.

*Open Democracy Action top priorities bills

ODA Agenda Item #1:

Establish small donor, voter-owned elections

*[SB 304](#) Voter-Owned Elections Act was amended to be a legislative study committee, rather than a full-fledged bill. This committee will allow us to educate the legislature on the value of publicly-funded elections. With record amounts of money in NH's elections expected in 2020, the question is no longer whether we can afford public financing of elections; it's whether we can afford not to. On Jan 8, 2020 this was passed by the Senate and is heading to the House.

Together, we fix it.
and end the influence of BIG Money politics

- ✓ Establish small donor, voter-owned elections
- ✓ End gerrymandering, and modernize voting
- ✓ Eradicate Super PACs & neutralize Citizens United
- ✓ Expose anonymous Dark Money
- ✓ Eliminate Pay-to-Play lobbyist & contractor donations
- ✓ Enforce campaign finance laws & close loopholes

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ODA Agenda Item #2: End gerrymandering and modernize voting

Redistricting

[*HB1665](#) establishes an independent redistricting commission to overcome partisan gerrymandering. An outstanding turnout of support greeted legislators on Tuesday, Jan. 28 for HB 1665, an almost clone of the bipartisan HB 706 redistricting commission. The bill proposes a commission of 15 members, 5 democrats, 5 Republicans who would then choose the final five independents and third party members. The selection system works similar to a jury selection, where the major party members may object to nominees from the other party. Two legislators voiced concerns that the legislature wouldn't be able to amend the bill, though proponents argued that the legislature could return the commission's proposal for changes prior to the legislature's approval. **ODA Priority Bill**



[Get more information about HB 1665, including informational handouts.](#)

[SB 8](#), a 2019 bill which was retained in committee, is similar to HB 1665 and establishes an independent redistricting commission. The bill passed the Senate and the House, has now headed to the Finance committee in the House. Executive session is scheduled for 02/05/2020 at 10:00 am in LOB room 210-211. This bill, too, is similar to HB 706, but is expected to take a back seat to the HB 1665 bill for now.

Modernize voting

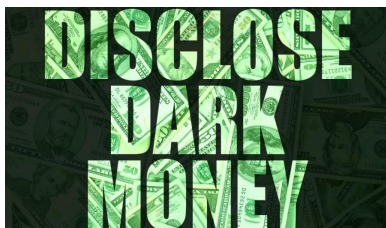
[SB 7](#) - establishing the secure modern accurate registration act (SMART ACT) which creates an automatic voter registration system for NH, passed the senate and the house, is currently in house finance, and executive session is scheduled for 02/05/2020 at 10:00 am in LOB 210-211

[SB 305](#)- Online Voter Registration and establishment of an election information portal, passed the Senate, referred to the Finance Committee.

[HB 1534](#), establishing a commission to study the creation of online voter registration for the 2022 state elections. Was heard on 1/21 in House Election Law.

ODA Agenda Item #3: Eradicate Super PACs & Neutralize Citizens United

[*HB 1643](#), a bill banning corporations and special interests from making donations directly to candidates using unrestricted funds. The public hearing in House election law was Jan 21, and there is an executive session to vote on the bill in committee this Wednesday, Feb 5 in House elections law



ODA Agenda Item #4: Expose unlimited, anonymous Dark Money

[*HB 1525](#), which requires registration and reporting of groups spending \$2500 or more of political activity in New Hampshire to register with the Secretary of State's office. Last year's predecessor to this bill, SB 106, passed unanimously in its House & Senate committees, but was vetoed. Americans for Prosperity has already

testified against the bill, so if you believe that anyone spending money in our election system should stand up and be recognized, you need to shout to get the attention of legislators and the governor.

[HB 1415](#) is a study committee which will examine a Montana law restricting anonymous out-of-state Dark Money, and will determine whether this can be applied to New Hampshire law. In recent years, money from Dark Money LLCs has come across the border to fund gubernatorial races. The bill bans this money and in-kind contributions within 90 days of the date of the election. House Election Law had a hearing on 1/15/20.

ODA Agenda Item #5

Eliminate Pay-To-Play Lobbyist & contractor donations

Pay to Play

[SB 490](#), Eliminate Pay-To-Play contractor donations. The bill gives the voters confidence that the State of New Hampshire is looking out for their interests, and will eliminate the “appearance of impropriety” from our system. The bill had a hearing on January 22 in Senate election law, and some legislators showed concern about sources of campaign donations. The bill targets legislators and department heads who have procurement or oversight on state contracts. It affects the Executive Council the most, but also affects State department heads who are lobbied by health care companies, asphalt paving contractors, bridge contractors, etc.

Lobbyist Reform

[*HB 1669](#), requiring electronic filing of lobbyist forms, hearing was held in the House Legislative Administration committee at 11:00 AM, Jan. 29. This bill would save the Secretary of State time and money. Right now, the SOS office scans every document and puts the data up on a database! Not stone tablets, but pretty close.

[HB 1413](#), requiring lobbyist forms submitted in writing to be legible. The hearing was held at on January 29, and the committee has not yet acted on the bill. Which, if we had electronic filing would be moot!

[HB 1183](#), establishing a committee to study RSA 15 relative to lobbyists. The House Legislative Administration committee also heard this bill on January 29. This committee would review the current statutes affecting lobbyists and make recommendations on rules for transparency, legislator-to-lobbyist revolving door, and pay-to-play restrictions for state contracts.

[HB 1584](#), relative to the penalty for failure to comply with the statutory requirements for lobbyists, Currently, the state attorney general does little in the way of enforcement, partly because of the lack of rules to enforce. New Hampshire is behind other states in lobbying reform legislation. The hearing has been held and we expect action at the same time as the other lobbying bills.

ODA Agenda Item #6

Enforce campaign finance laws & close loopholes

[HB 1191](#), defining what campaign funds can and cannot be used for. The public hearing in House election law was 1/21.

[HB 1296](#), requiring candidates for municipal offices to comply with campaign finance laws. The public hearing was on 1/14 in Municipal and County Government. This bill was voted 20-0 inexpedient to legislate and will likely die in the House. It does not mean, however, that there is not a need for statute hear. There have been allegations of outside money influence in the Keene and Portsmouth races. Some cities, like Manchester, have campaign finance rules already on the books.

[SB 586](#), requiring back up receipts for candidates who give more than \$1,000 to themselves or family.



ODA Highlighted Bills

Educate and Engage Citizens

[SB 537](#), Legislation moved forward by the Open Democracy “Granny D Legacy Committee,” the Granny D Day bill would establish a permanent observance of Doris Haddock's birthday, January 24. Senate Election law passed this 5-0 on 1/22/20 and it *passed unanimously* in the NH Senate session on January 28. You're on your way, Granny D!

[HB1395](#), establishing a committee to study ballot access and improve civic engagement. This was heard on 1/22/20 in House Election Law.



UPCOMING HEARINGS, COMMITTEE VOTES AND SESSIONS

Red = Open Democracy Action Priority Bill

Hearings & Executive Sessions

Wednesday, February 5

HOUSE ELECTION LAW, Hearing Room 308, LOB 11:00 a.m. Executive session on:

[HB 1214](#), permitting certain political organizations to appear on a general election ballot after holding a nominating convention;

[HB 1299](#), relative to selectmen pro tem on state election day;

[HB 1357](#), relative to the distribution of campaign materials inside a polling place;

[HB 1403](#), relative to removing party columns from general election ballots;

[HB 1457](#)-FN-L, requiring election officers and supervisors of the checklist to visit skilled nursing facilities and elderly and disabled residences within their jurisdiction for the purpose of assisting with voter registration and casting absentee ballots;

[HB 1531](#), relative to the release of voting information in a presidential election;

[HB 1643](#)-FN, relative to permissible campaign contributions by business organizations and labor unions and relative to funding source disclosure for political advertising. This bill will

ODA Priority Bill

[HCR 8](#), celebrating August 26, 2020 as the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which guarantees that the right to vote shall not be denied on the basis of sex

LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION, Room 303, LOB.

1:00 p.m. Executive session on:

[HB 1358](#), relative to the identification of lobbyists;

[HB 1359](#), relative to employment as a lobbyist;

[HB 1183](#), establishing a committee to study the registration of lobbyists; **ODA Priority Bill**

[HB 1413](#), requiring lobbyist forms submitted in writing to be legible; **ODA Priority Bill**

[HB 1584](#), relative to the penalty for failure to comply with the requirements for lobbyists; **ODA Priority Bill**

[HB 1669](#)-FN, requiring electronic filing of lobbyist's forms and statements. **ODA Priority Bill**

Full House & Senate Sessions This Week

Thursday, February 6

Senate Session, 10 AM, Senate Chambers, State House

There are no Democracy reform bills before the full Senate this week.

House Session, 10 AM, Representatives Hall, State House

The only bill we had been keeping an eye on which is before the full House this week is [HB 1296](#), requiring certain candidates for municipal office to comply with certain campaign finance laws. This bill was in response to outside money being spent in recent municipal races, but the Election Law Committee voted 20-0 Inexpedient to Legislate. The committee felt that these rules were best enacted at the municipal level, instead of being overseen by the Secretary of State's office.

Upcoming Sessions

Next House Session Scheduled for Feb. 19 & 20

The House speaker has notified legislators to set aside Wednesday, Feb. 19 as a possible session day, and Thursday, Feb. 20 as a definite session day. We will be monitoring to see which bills go before the full legislature.

Write a Letter-to-the-Editor Supporting the HB 1665 Independent Redistricting Commission

The full NH House will be voting on HB 1665, in the next few weeks. This bill is mostly a clone of HB 706, which passed both houses last year and was vetoed by Governor Sununu. If you need some help with some of the details, here's [an HB 1665 resource](#) on Open Democracy Action which can help provide some additional information on the bill.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[Check out this outstanding Letter-to-the-Editor on HB 1665](#) from former ODA Board member and Kent Street

Coalition organizer Kyri Claflin of Concord! And please SHARE, and tag @GovernorChrisSununu when you do.

Have You Heard?

The [Open Democracy Minute](#) is coming up on its one-year anniversary. Each week, this 90-second synopsis of the big legislative bills and coming events runs on WNH-FM in Concord at 10:58 AM, but is always available on the Open Democracy website at [OpenDemocracyNH.org](#).



What You Need to Know about Voting in New Hampshire

Step 1: Register to Vote

Every New Hampshire citizen, 18 years and older, has the Constitutional right to vote. You don't have to live in your town or in NH for any set length of time before registering.

17-year-olds may register to vote if they will be 18 by the time of the next scheduled election.

If you are already registered in your town, you don't have to register again.

Where to Register to Vote

- At your town or city clerk's office up to 6-13 days before any election (blackout period varies by election. Check with city/town clerk).
- At the polling place on Election Day. This can take extra time during major elections.

What to Bring with You to Register

If you can, bring paperwork to show your identity, age, citizenship. A driver's license, passport, or other photo ID will work. Both certificate or naturalization papers will prove citizenship. Also bring something that shows where you live, such as a utility bill addressed to you.

If you don't have these documents, you will be allowed to sign a statement attesting to your identity, age, citizenship, or domicile.

The registration form asks for your name, age, place of birth, and where you live now. If you were registered somewhere else before, report your previous voting address. The form also asks for a driver's license ID number or the last four digits of your Social Security number.

You'll be asked to read and sign a statement saying you understand voting fraud is a crime.

May You Register Absentee?

If you can't register in person, you may register by mail.

Ask your town or city clerk for an absentee voter registration affidavit and a standard voter registration form. The affidavit must be witnessed and both documents returned to your clerk's office at least 10 days before an election.

Must You Register for a Specific Party?

No. If you prefer to keep your options open for voting in the Presidential or state primaries, you may register as "undeclared." When you go to the polls, ask for the ballot of the party you want to vote for. Unless you change back to "undeclared" on your way out of the polling place, you will be considered a member of that party for the next election.

Be an Evangelist for Voting! Here's What Your Friends Need to Know about Voting in the NH Primary on Feb. 11!

On social media and in person, please encourage your friends and family to vote. Money-in-politics has done damage to our Democracy, but so has voter apathy!

The League of Women Voters has created a great guide in PDF called ["What You Need to Know About Voting in New Hampshire"](#)

Step 2: Vote!

Absentee Voting

If you're a registered voter but you can't vote in person because of disability, religious beliefs, work hours, military service, or temporary absence, you may ask your city or town clerk for an absentee ballot application in advance of the election. Fill out the applications and return it to your town or city clerk.

When you get your ballot in the mail, fill it out and mail it back to your town or city clerk. The clerk must receive it by 5pm of Election Day. Ballots may not be faxed.

Voting in Person

If possible, show a valid photo ID to the Ballot Clerk at the polls. You need only one ID! Acceptable photo IDs include the following:

- Driver's license from NH or any other state (current or expired no more than 5 years*);
- Non-driver's photo ID issued by NH Department of Motor Vehicles;
- US armed services ID card;
- US passport or passport (current or expired no more than 5 years*);
- Valid student ID card;
- Other photo ID acceptable to the moderator, supervisor of the checklist, or town clerk;
- Verification of a person's identity by the moderator, supervisor of the checklist or town or city clerk.

*For voters over 65 years old, no expiration date restriction applies.

If you don't have a photo ID listed above, you will still be able to get a ballot by signing an affidavit saying you are who you claim to be. Your photo will be taken at the polls and attached to the affidavit.

(This flyer represents election law in effect in 2019 and for the 2020 presidential primary)

Your Vote is Your Voice! Every Vote Counts!

Prepared as a voter education service by the League of Women Voters New Hampshire

LWNH LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS 4 Park Street, Box 200, Concord, NH 03301
www.lwnh.org

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization whose goals include a well-informed voting public. We do not support or oppose any particular party or candidate.

which answers most the most common questions about what documents you need, where and when to go, your "domicile" and more. The URL is:

http://www.lwnh.org/files/voting_info_nh_simple_flyer_aug_2019.pdf

and we'd urge you to spread it around. Above are graphics of that same flyer you can use in Facebook and Instagram posts.

More questions? Consult with your town or city clerk! Friends don't let friends not vote!

Legislation We're Watching this Term

To see updates and descriptions of the other important Democracy legislation for this term, click on the links below.



Public Funding

Redistricting & Ending Gerrymandering

Campaign Reform

Money-in-Politics

Questions? Want to Help?

Olivia Zink: olivia@opendemocracy.me; (603) 661-8621 (cell)

Bob Perry: perry4nh@gmail.com

Brian Beihl: Brian@Beihl.org (603) 620-8300 (cell)