



February 4, 2025

Honorable Chairman Berry  
NH House Committee on Election Law  
Subject: Testimony in Opposition of New Hampshire House Bill 217  
Dear Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. For the record, my name is Krysten Evans, and I serve as the Director of Policy for ABLE NH, a statewide disability justice organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the civil and human rights of people with disabilities in New Hampshire. I am here today to strongly oppose HB 217, which would require absentee registrants to provide copies of documentation proving their citizenship, age, domicile, and identity.

At ABLE NH, we work to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to all aspects of civic life, including the fundamental right to vote. This bill creates an undue burden for many eligible voters, particularly those with disabilities who rely on absentee registration and voting to exercise their rights.

For many people with disabilities, gathering and submitting additional documentation is not a simple task. Obtaining copies of birth certificates, passports, or other official documents often requires travel to government offices, payment of fees, or access to technology for scanning and printing, barriers that disproportionately affect individuals with mobility limitations, cognitive disabilities, low-income residents, and those who do not have access to reliable transportation.

This bill would also negatively impact voters who require support to obtain and manage their personal records. Many individuals with disabilities rely on guardians, caregivers, or other support networks to assist them with administrative tasks, which can further complicate the process and delay their ability to register.

Additionally, existing federal protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Voting Rights Act ensure that voting processes must be accessible to people with disabilities. HB 217 risks violating these protections by imposing a bureaucratic hurdle that is not equally surmountable for all voters.

New Hampshire has historically been a leader in civic participation, and our state has worked to improve access to absentee voting for those who need it most. This bill moves us in the wrong direction. Rather than creating additional barriers, we should be working to expand accessible registration and voting options, ensuring that all eligible citizens, regardless of disability, age, or socioeconomic status, can fully participate in our democracy.

For these reasons, ABLE NH urges you to vote Inexpedient to Legislate on HB 217. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Krysten Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krysten Evans

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