

The 2012 Voter ID Law, What is Next

The New Hampshire "Voter ID" Law requires that for any election, voters present a photo ID to check in and vote. For elections held prior to September 1, 2013, the identification can be: a U.S. Passport, Federal ID card such as Military ID, State ID, such as Driver's License (even if expired) or DMV issued non-driver ID card, valid Student ID, other photo "deemed legitimate" by the Supervisor of the Checklist, the Moderator or the Clerk. Further, if the Clerk, Moderator or Supervisor of the Checklist can verify identity of the voter, then ID is not required. The end result is to permit many forms of ID, and if the voter has none of them, and the voter is unable to confirm identity through any of these means, the voter may fill out and swear to an Affidavit that he or she was who he or she said they were, and then get a ballot. The statute becomes fully operational on September 1, 2013, at which time, different, somewhat more restrictive requirements for ID will be put in place.

In Exeter, at the November 2012 election, with 8995 voters voting, 70 people did not have a suitable ID and executed Affidavits. Many had an ID but had left it home, or in their car. No one was turned away from voting for lack of ID or lack of willingness to sign an Affidavit. Similarly, there were a few voters at the South Hampton election who did not have ID, or did not wish to present it, but they were allowed to vote because an Affidavit was completed.

The Exeter process was monitored by the party representatives who early on complained about a sign which noted that voters needed to produce an ID, and so it was amended by adding the words "or Affidavit". Other than this complaint, the November 2012 election proceeded largely without incident in our respective communities, although we anticipate that the Secretary of State will need to provide further clarification on various operational aspects of the statute going forward after September 2013.

It is unclear whether New Hampshire will retain the Voter ID law or whether New Hampshire will repeal same; several bills have been introduced in the legislature this year to repeal or modify the law. Regardless of whether the Voter ID law remains intact, moderators as well as other election officials will need to keep up to date on the current state of the law and the proper implementation of same.

By Charles Tucker, Exeter Town Moderator
for 24 years, and whose term ends in 2013, and

Sharon Somers, South Hampton Moderator
For 3 years