



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

July 30, 2021

Governor's Veto Message Regarding House Bill 98

By the authority vested in me, pursuant to part II, Article 44 of the New Hampshire Constitution, on July 30, 2021, I have vetoed House Bill 98, relative to the date of the state primary election.

I agree with the Secretary of State that House Bill 98 creates more problems than it solves. House Bill 98 would change our state primary from its current September date to the first Tuesday in August, moving our primary election - and the campaign season for that election - into the middle of the summer. This is a time when many Granite Staters are enjoying their vacations and are far less likely to be involved in the electoral process. This change could lead to depressed voter engagement in the election and reduced turnout. Furthermore, moving the primary election to the summer could hurt the ability of municipalities to recruit poll workers and Election Day volunteers, greatly exacerbating a challenge that many municipalities are already struggling with.

Some advocates of this legislation point to the supposed challenge of election officials meeting the deadlines to send absentee ballots to members of the military or other overseas Granite Staters. It is important to note that New Hampshire has never failed to meet those deadlines set forth by the Federal Government. In fact, according to the Secretary of State, New Hampshire is one of just a few states that have never been sued for such a failure. However, House Bill 98 gives the Secretary of State nine fewer days between the end of the filing period and the primary day elections to make and print ballots. Although partially intended to ease time constraints on the Secretary of State, this bill could add burdens onto their process.

New Hampshire's elections are the gold standard for the rest of the country, and our primary date schedule has stood the test of time. Our Secretary of State, who has run our state's elections for 45 years, believes this legislation will add significant challenges to a process that does not need to be changed.

For the reasons stated above, I have vetoed House Bill 98.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher T. Sununu".

Christopher T. Sununu
Governor