

EDR testimony for Senate Committee 2/17/15

I do favor election day voter registration for lots of reasons.

For Brattleboro, as well other eastern border towns, part of the issue is that NH has EDR. Many area voters tune into to NH radio and TV and learn that they can register and vote on election day.

Voters don't realize that voting is not uniform from state to state. (and why should they!) They assume that what they hear on NH media holds true for Vermont.

I have turned away many potential voters for this reason. They just didn't know. We clerks live and breathe elections for months before each one but don't always stop to realize that to those not involved to the extent that we are, its just another day. They may have marked their calendar so as to take a few minutes out of the day to do their civic duty and that's all there is to it for them.

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Another reason I support EDR is that society in general has become accustomed to instant gratification. Lives are more hectic than they use to be and people are more mobile. People do not always understand that their voter registration doesn't just automatically follow them from one location to another.

I think we clerks are in our jobs partly because we like organization and are good planners. But not everyone shares those skills. I think of single moms who struggle every day just to make ends meet and those who deal with more life threatening issues on a daily basis than voting. Why should we simply assume that knowing the ins and outs of voting is at the top of their list of things to do. I admit, It IS frustrating sometimes to feel like we are babysitters, but some of our townspeople actually NEED someone to help them and we are here to serve ALL our townspeople.

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I do not however, advocate for making EDR so loose that there is no voter responsibility at all. In fact, if someone wishes to register on election day, they need to be prepared to prove that they have a right to be voting in

THAT location on that day.

But with documentation the potential for fraud should be nil. I must admit that I am not in fear of widespread fraud. This is Vermont, its not Ohio or Florida. Maybe I am just naive! but I feel that its tough enough to get people to vote once, never mind twice!

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I don't think the numbers of EDR voters will be as high as some have predicted. We have over 9,000 on our checklist in Brattleboro and I don't think that the numbers that register on election day will be unmanageable. The reason I think that is that we have motor-voter. NH does not. And while we all complain about motor voter, in reality it does catch a great many voters wishing to register. We clerks often see motor voter as a negative because what we see are those who slip through the cracks but this is an opportunity to make it work FOR us.

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Early voting comes close to crippling my office for a presidential election in both time and expense for postage, (approx 2,500 for some elections) but we promote it. It is a good thing! And so is EDR. EDR does mean making some changes in my polling places but with some planning it can be very workable.

While I am aware that I am in the minority of Vermont town clerks on this issue, I do think EDR is a good thing and I also think that if we work together we can pass a good bill with everyone's best interest in mind.