

Same Day Voter Registration:

- Voting is a right protected by both the US and VT Constitutions
 - It is important that we remember this as we discuss Same Day Voter Registration.
 - The law should protect this right and only limit it when absolutely necessary
 - It is about increasing voter participation
 - Every eligible person should have the ability to cast a ballot

 - Which makes us ask: is a registration deadline absolutely necessary?
 - My testimony to this committee is that it is not.

 - The deadline serves an administrative purpose for Town Clerks.

 - Please do not mistake me, the point is not to overly burden our Town Clerks on the run up to the election and on Election Day.

 - However, in working with Town Clerks in my role as the top elections officer of the state, I do not think the administrative benefit of a deadline justifies limiting a right of the people of Vermont.

 - Furthermore, I believe we can work with the Town Clerks to put into place a law that does not add unnecessary burden to their offices.

 - Statistics show that voter participation is higher in those states with EDR - approximately 7 - 12%.
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- I want to thank Senator Pollina for introducing this bill and would like to suggest the two following amendments:
 - First: remove the deadline for registration all together.
 - Will dramatically simplify the law but more importantly
 - Create less voter confusion

- Reduce further administrative burden on Town Clerks and the SoS as we respond to phone calls and in person requests to register from people the day before the election.
 - Will be less work to allow voters to register than explain why they cannot register the day before an election but they could register the day of.
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- Second: Remove the voter ID requirement.
 - This goes against the spirit of the Vermont Statutes (17 VSA 2145(c)) that puts the burden on the voter and explicitly prohibits the Municipality from taking these actions.
 - Additionally, for those who are concerned about voter fraud, I would point out that ID would be a duplicate effort as anyone who attempts to vote twice would be found out by the voter checklist.
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Voter Fraud in General:

- To those who are concerned about voter fraud, I offer two points:
 - I would reiterate that Vermont statute holds the voter accountable for accurate registration and has severe penalties for fraud.
 - While I was not there when this law was passed and thus cannot speak to intent, I can only assume that this is because the legislature understood that voting is a right and that registration should be done in the way that least infringes on that right.
 - I would also ask you to remember that Vermont does not have an issue with voter fraud. I have no doubt that this serious crime would be taken up by the AG's office - and might suggest you have the AG testify if this is an area of concern for this committee.
 - Lastly, the true voter fraud would be denying any eligible voter from their constitutional right.
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- Lastly, my office has been asked by a few individual legislators if there is currently an issue of voters not being able to vote.
 - My answer is yes.
- Every year, my elections division receives phone calls from citizens who missed the deadline but are otherwise completely eligible to vote. I am sure that there are many Town Offices that have received similar calls.
- Right now my office has no reasonable answer for why these Vermonters cannot exercise a right granted to them under our constitution.
- If you want to positively effect voter turnout, we can encourage Vermonters simply by granting them the access they rightly deserve.
- Simply put, this is a matter of balancing a protected right vs. burden or obstruction.
- With that, I will thank the committee for taking up this important priority for my office and ask if there are any further questions?

Election Day Registration States	
	Year Enacted
California*	2012
Colorado	2013
Connecticut	2012
District of Columbia	2010
Hawaii***	2014
Idaho	1994
Illinois**	2014
Iowa	2007
Maine	1973
Minnesota	1974
Montana	2005
New Hampshire	1996
Wisconsin	1975
Wyoming	1994

*California's same-day registration will take effect on January 1 of the year following the year in which the Secretary of State certifies that the state has a statewide voter registration database that complies with the requirements of the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002 (no sooner than January 2014).

**After a successful pilot in the November 2014 general election, same-day registration was made permanent by SB172 and goes into effect on June 1, 2015.

***Not implemented until 2018.