



*House Government Operations Committee
Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Tuesday, February 7, 2017*

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on H.42, an act relating to appointing municipal clerks and treasurers and to incompatible municipal offices.

VLCT supports the provisions of the bill that allows a municipality to vote to authorize its legislative body to appoint its municipal clerk and treasurer. This is a change we have advocated for over the past few years in the legislature. This change in law would simply allow voters to allow the selectboard to appoint a town clerk or treasurer, an option that already exists for other offices, such as the lister, and the collector of delinquent taxes. Many municipalities have gone to great lengths to make this change and have had to go about creating or amending town charters in order to do so. It only makes sense that a similar option be given to all voters, rather than having to go about the lengthy process adopting or amending a town charter.

The second provision of H.42 proposes to make the office of treasurer incompatible with the office of collector of delinquent taxes. VLCT strongly opposes this proposal. It is quite common in Vermont to have the collector of delinquent taxes and treasurer be the same person. Statute already outlines the duties that must be fulfilled for each officer and it is unclear what problem this provision would solve for communities, and we see this proposal as arbitrary. If there are concerns over the handling of monies and the overall administration of duties of particular officers, the League believe it would be more prudent to change those specific areas of state law to ensure the correct checks and balances exists, and the job duties spelled out in statute align with best management practices for those offices.

We encourage the committee amend H.42 by striking out the addition of 17 V.S.A. § 2651f in its entirety, and keeping the provisions that allow for voters to authorize Selectboard to appoint town clerks and treasurers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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