



OFFICE OF THE CLERK/TREASURER

City of Burlington

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To: Vermont State Senate

From: Amy Bovee, Assistant City Clerk

Date: April 11, 2017

Re: H.514 – Need for a Gap Day

In reviewing H.514, §2531(2) allows Town Clerks who do not have regular office hours on the day before the election to remain closed and not accept applications for absentee ballots or voter registration. This allows Clerks in smaller Towns time between the end of voter registration and absentee voting to prepare for Election Day. In Burlington, offices remain open until 5:00pm to accept applications for voter registration and absentee voting. Having to accept new applications for absentee ballots and voter registration on the day before the Election presents serious challenges for a City the size of Burlington. The Burlington Clerk/Treasurer's Office processed over 500 voter registration applications and made address and name updates to nearly 200 voters on November 2, the deadline to register to vote for the General Election. We also had nearly 500 voters vote absentee on November 7, the day before the General Election. Now that Election Day Registration is in place, all of this work would need to be done in one day which would be logistically challenging if not impossible.

Accepting applications this close to an Election also causes problems in printing the physical voter checklists to be used at the polls. Voter information and absentee information must be as up to date as possible before the voter checklists can be generated and printed. Historically, voter registration stopped the Wednesday before the Election which allowed time to finalize the voter checklist and outsource this large print job (nearly 5,000 pages) to a local printer over the weekend before the Election. However, with Election Day Registration, printing the checklist over the weekend means that we do not have up to date information for any voter who comes into the office to vote absentee, register to vote, or to update their information on the Monday

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before the Election.

The City of Burlington respectfully requests that the Legislature considers including language to allow a gap day which would pause absentee voting and voter registration on the Monday before an Election to allow staff time to finalize and print the voter checklist, process and prepare all absentee ballots for counting, and to set up polling places.

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