

Good afternoon and thank you for the invitation. I am Tim Arsenault, the Town Clerk in Vernon and the current co-chair of the Vermont Municipal Clerk Treasurer's Association Legislative committee.

I have a short list of items that are priorities for our committee, with election issues on top of our list.

Ranked choice voting has become a priority for the Secretary of State's office and for many lawmakers. We are asking that any move in that direction, perhaps for the 2028 Presidential Primary, be accompanied by an education campaign for voters, the Town and city clerks and the volunteers who administer the elections.

Secondly, we would request the legislature move toward greater consistency in our election process. Do we mail ballots or not, Do You declare a party, as is done in the presidential primary, for the August state primary election? Since 2020, there has been a lot of voter confusion, and distrust of the process.

Vermonters want to be able to understand the process, and trust that their votes will be counted promptly and accurately.

The new division of animal welfare, approved during the 2024 session, included with it a two dollar surcharge of dog licenses. We request that the animal welfare operate a statewide database of rabies certificates for all dogs, and veterinarians be required to submit that information. New Hampshire and Massachusetts are currently required to report their rabies information to clerks, and as a border town, we in Vernon regularly get that information. The difference between mailing and home addresses might make sending the information to clerks problematic, but a central data base would be easier for both clerks and law enforcement to access the information.

When our residents, or when property researchers come to our office, we do not ask them about their politics, or anything which seeks to divide. We serve everyone who comes to our doors. We would hope the Vermont legislature would also move forward in a manner that serves all it's citizens.