



20 February 2006

To the Editor:

I am writing in support of Vermont Senate Bill #164, which gives eligible citizens the opportunity to register to vote on Election Day.

The states with the highest voter participation have same-day registration. They are: Minnesota (77.3% participation in 2004), Maine (75.3%), Wisconsin (73.9%) and New Hampshire (71.9%). In 2004 Vermont's turnout was 64 percent of the voting age population. This means that over 150,000 eligible Vermonters didn't vote in the last presidential election.

Although there has been no increase in election fraud in states using same day registration, there is a perception that increased fraud could be a problem. Consequently, Vermont's proposal includes safeguards, including more stringent identification requirements for those registering on Election Day.

States that have same day registration like it! Not only do voters in states that have same day registration like it, but so do their elections administrators. The chief elections administrators from Wyoming, Wisconsin and New Hampshire testified in favor of Vermont's legislation and clerks from other states have reported that they implemented same day registration without significant problems. Local election officials in states that have same day registration have expressed overwhelming support for the practice.

S.164 was passed unanimously by the Senate and is to go before the House soon after Town Meeting Day. Please ask your state Representative to support this important bill, which, as the evidence shows, will increase voter turnout in Vermont.

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