



SB2 Presentation

April 23rd 2009



What's SB2?

A voting initiative- nothing more

- **Not** *a change in government*
- **Only** *changes who can vote, when we vote and how we vote*

*If someone tells you something different they are **mistaken** ([NH RSA40:13](#))*

What's SB2?



Per the NH Dept. of Revenue Administration ([SB2 Tech Asst. Rev. 05/08](#)):

*SB2 is a form of **town meeting** that has 2 sessions:*

- **A deliberative session-** articles can be explained, discussed, debated and amended in **exactly** the same format as Town Meeting

What's SB2?



Per the NH Dept. of Revenue Administration ([SB2 Tech Asst. Rev. 05/08](#)):

Followed about 30 days later by:

- **A voting session-** articles as presented or amended will be placed on the official ballot and voted upon in a voting booth

All registered voters can vote



Is SB2 new?

Around by statute since 1996

- **More than half** *of NH town voters vote under SB2
- **Only about a third** of New Hampshire towns operate under a traditional town meeting (New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies 2/16/2009)

Town Meeting	Official Ballot (SB2)
421,091	427,492
32.0%	32.5%

*As of 2006 and growing. Source: NH DRA

NH SB2 Schools

(as of 3/2009 Source: NH Dept. of Rev. Admin.)

Acworth	Claremont	Grafton	Lee	Newton	Sutton
Alexandria	Conway	Greenfield	Litchfield	North Hampton	Swanzey
Allenstown	Danbury	Greenville	Littleton	Nottingham	Temple
Alstead	Danville	Groton,	Londonderry	Orange	Thornton
Alton	Deerfield	Hampstead	Lyndeborough	Ossipee	Troy
Amherst	Deering	Hampton	Madbury	Pelham	Tuftonboro
Antrim	Derry	Hampton Falls	Madison	Peterborough	Wakefield
Ashland	Dorchester	Hancock	Mason	Plaistow	Walpole
Atkinson	Dublin	Hebron	Merrimack	Plymouth	Warner
Auburn	Durham	Henniker	Middleton	Raymond	Waterville Valley
Average	East Kingston	Hillsboro	Milford	Rindge	Weare
Bedford	Effingham	Holdernes	Milton	Rumney	Wentworth
Bennington	Enfield	Hooksett	Mont Vernon	Rye	Whitefield
Bradford	Epping	Hudson	New Boston	Salem	Wilmot
Bridgewater	Epsom	Jaffrey	New Durham	Sandown	Winchester
Bristol	Exeter	Jefferson	New Hampton	Seabrook	Windham
Brookfield	Farmington	Keene	New Ipswich	Sharon	Windsor
Campton	Fitzwilliam	Kensington	New London	South Hampton	Wolfeboro
Canaan	Francestown	Kingston	Newbury	Springfield	
Candia	Gilford	Lancaster	Newfields	Stratham	
Charlestown	Gilsum	Langdon	Newmarket	Sullivan	
Chester	Goffstown	Lebanon	Newport	Sunapee	

NH SB2 Towns (as of 3/2009 Source: NH Dept. of Rev. Admin.)

1	Allenstown	16	Conway	31	Hooksett	46	Newton	61	Winchester
2	Alstead	17	Danbury	32	Hudson	47	North Hampton	62	Windham
3	Alton	18	Danville	33	Kensington	48	Pelham	63	Wolfeboro
4	Amherst	19	Deerfield	34	Kingston	49	Peterborough		
5	Ashland	20	East Kingston	35	Litchfield	50	Plaistow		
6	Atkinson	21	Epping	36	Littleton	51	Raymond		
7	Auburn	22	Epsom	37	Londonderry	52	Rindge		
8	Barrington	23	Exeter	38	Merrimack	53	Rye		
9	Belmont	24	Fremont	39	Milford	54	Salem		
10	Bennington	25	Gilford	40	Milton	55	Sandown		
11	Bethlehem	26	Goffstown	41	New Boston	56	Seabrook		
12	Canaan	27	Grafton	42	New Hampton	57	Sunapee		
13	Candia	28	Hampstead	43	New Ipswich	58	Swanzey		
14	Carroll	29	Hampton	44	Newmarket	59	Wakefield		
15	Charlestown	30	Hampton Falls	45	Newport	60	Weare		



What really happens with SB2?

You may hear ...The fastest way to destroy a school district is with SB2

The facts?

- *The difference in approved budgets in SB2 and traditional Town Meeting districts is negligible*
- *73 Schools/Districts have adopted SB2 since 1996
(Source:NH DRA)*

Not a single one has ever rescinded it.

Source: The Effect of the Official Ballot Referendum Form of Meeting on the Towns and School Districts of New Hampshire, NH Center for Public Policy



What really happens with SB2?

People don't vote their pocketbooks

- *Higher appropriations per capita were proposed and approved in SB2 municipalities than in traditional town meeting towns*
- *The difference (in appropriations per capita) among school districts was statistically negligible.*

Source: The Effect of the Official Ballot Referendum Form of Meeting on the Towns and School Districts of New Hampshire, NH Center for Public Policy



With SB2:

Every registered voter can vote unlike Town Meeting

- *There are more than 5500- registered voters in Bow*
- *Bow consistently turns out high percentages of voters on official ballot elections.*
- *Bow consistently turns out low voter turnout at town/school meetings*
- *It is rare for town/school meetings to exceed 10% voters and it is the norm to have 5% or less.*



Major Flaws Town/School Meetings

How do flaws effect Bow voters

- *Town/School Meetings are exclusive. This flaw denies informed voters their right to vote if they are for reason any unable to make the meeting.*
- *Intimidating- Most votes are cast in public where people are watching your every vote.*
- *Town meeting rules are very complex and confusing. These rules are easily abused because they are difficult to understand.*



Major Flaws Town/School Meetings

How do flaws effect Bow voters (Continued)

- *One sided Debate: Debates are often one-sided hard sell “infomercials”. Questioners are limited to 3 minute for questions and responses.*
- *Little time is given to reach your decision.*
- *Very Unrepresentative-Meeting starting time of 7:00 PM & long drawn out meetings make it difficult for our military, seniors, the handicap & people who work off shifts & many others to attend (more than 90% usually don't attend).*



Major Flaws Town/School Meetings

How do flaws effect Bow voters (Continued)

- *Misinformation is Mistaken for Education: So called “experts” have misinformed Bow voters on multiple occasions. Such as the need for a new school & saying the enrollment was increasing when it was actually decreasing. No time to fact check this misinformation at the meeting.*



Meeting are Difficult for People to Attend

- *Only a few dozen Bow voters (about 1% of all registered voters) attended the 2007 School District Meeting and that 1% voted on millions of dollars of expenditures for the remaining 99% to pay.*
- *Only 4 non elected officials attended the Bow Town warrant article public hearing this year.*
- *The attendance of meetings show meetings are difficult for people to attend.*



With SB2:

Every registered voter can vote unlike Town Meeting

You have no vote at Town Meeting

- *If you are away in the military or other service to your country*
- *You are a retiree away for the winter*
- *Unable or can't afford to leave work*
- *Your are sick or a loved one is.*
- *You are away on a business trip*



***With SB2:
Unlike Town Meeting***

- ***Voting is easy. Voting hours are very flexible from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM or by absentee ballot***
- ***Voting is private. You vote in the privacy of a voting booth. You vote the way you want to vote***
- ***Voting is efficient and convenient. No long lines & long hours.***
- ***SB2 Protects you from voter fraud.***
- ***Everyone who is eligible to vote can vote.***
- ***Gives the voter one month to learn the issues during which they can quiz both proponents and opponents of all warrant articles.***



Budgets and SB2

RSA 40:13 as explained by the NH DRA:

- A **default budget** is the budget that is adopted if the proposed **operating** budget fails
- The town must prepare an **operating budget** and a **default budget**
- The **default budget** and **operating budget** shall be disclosed **at the first budget hearing.**



Budgets and SB2

RSA 40:13 as explained by the NH DRA:

- A hearing on the **entire budget and default budget** must be held prior to posting the warrant



Budgets and SB2

RSA 40:13 as explained by the NH DRA:

- What is the *entire* budget?
 - *Operating budget plus....*
 - *Special warrant articles (any appropriations including petitioned articles)*
 - *Individual warrant articles (includes contractual obligations)*



Budgets and SB2

Critical distinction: **Special and **individual** warrant articles are separate from the operating budget.**

Fact: In most SB2 Towns this year, proposed operating budgets were lower than the default budgets



Summary

- We will still have *town meeting but just vote later*
- SB2 allows *everyone* the opportunity to vote in private and by absentee ballot
- *Is not* a change in government
- Warrant articles *are still debated* before final placement on the ballot
- NH Center for Public Policy data shows that SB2 *does not destroy* budgets and *does not* ruin school districts
- Bow's Population is a *great SB2 fit*.
- The default budget process applies *only to the operating budget*. *Other appropriations are still voted individually*
- *Town/School Meetings are flawed and those flaws are often problematic*
From the repeated abuse of the reconsideration vote, to voter intimidation to prohibiting informed eligible voters from exercising their right to vote due.