

# Planning and Development Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1140

AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF JUSTICES OF THE

**Title:** PEACE.

**Vote Date:** 3/24/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/10/2023

**File No.:**

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**SPONSORS OF BILL:** Planning and Development Committee

**REASONS FOR BILL:** To specify that a newly created office of justice of the peace may be filled by appointment prior to the next regular election. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that justices of the peace are appointed in a timely manner between elections. The amendment creates a working group to reevaluate and study the JP appointment process.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Office of the Secretary of the State, Secretary of the State, Stephanie Thomas:**

Madame Secretary states that, "this legislation would fix part of the issue that prevents towns from expanding the number of justices of the peace to reflect their current needs and population without having to wait until the four-year term expires to fill these offices, but only for the one-third of Justices of the Peace positions that are allotted to electors who are not members of major parties." The language solves the problem of filling new JP positions but would not address the issue of the two-thirds vacancies created by adding JP positions that are filled by major party electors. To appropriately solve the remaining problems, the Secretary proposes a study to analyze the methods used to determine the number of JPs in each town, the portability of appointments across town lines, the selection process, and other issues.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE ASSOCIATION, MANAGING MEMBER, JAY LORETTA:**

Numerous complaints were recorded concerning Justices of the Peace and town clerks by the Justice of the Peace Association during research. Key findings were systemic unfairness

in appointment process, disparity between municipalities, and no training requirement. Thus, the Association supports the bill and in particular the secretary of state's proposal to establish a working group to study and analyze issues related to justices of the peace.

**Manchester Corp Counsel, Assistant Town Attorney, John Sullivan:** Supports passage of the bill to fill 30 vacancies in the town of Manchester.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:** None expressed.

**Reported by:** Nick Badorek

**Date:** 3/27