Electronic Pollbooks: Key Components of a Smooth Election Day

E-pollbooks are digital versions of the voter rolls that are loaded onto secure digital devices. As a result of bipartisan legislation supported by local clerks and the New Hampshire Municipal Association, state law authorizes jurisdictions to purchase and use e-pollbooks as long as they comply with security requirements. E-pollbooks have become key technological components of a smooth and secure Election Day experience, and more jurisdictions should purchase and use them.

Paper Lists and E-Pollbooks: What's the Difference?

- **Traditionally, New Hampshire keeps voter lists in paper form.** To check in at the polls, a voter presents identification to a poll worker, who locates their name in the precinct's poll register. The voter then signs next to their name and is issued a ballot. The check-in process can be cumbersome and susceptible to data entry errors. It is the most frequent driver of long lines on Election Day.

- **E-pollbooks digitize the same process.** E-pollbooks are tablets pre-loaded with the voter rolls. Voters sign in quickly and securely by scanning the barcode on their drivers' license. Voters who lack barcoded IDs can provide other state-approved ID to a poll worker, who manually locates their name. Once the voter's record is found, the voter uses a stylus or finger to sign the tablet, and they receive a ballot.

Benefits of E-Pollbooks:

- **E-Pollbooks provide visibility.** They allow real-time updates of a voter's check-in, and automatically flag if a voter received an absentee ballot or has already voted. They auto-track how many voters have voted, and can generate detailed paper trails at any point during or after Election Day.

- **E-Pollbooks are secure.** They do not require internet connections, and are subject to a rigorous certification process. As of 2020, 38 states (including New Hampshire) used e-pollbooks in at least one jurisdiction, and 16 states use them exclusively.

- **E-pollbooks ease bottlenecks.** They reduce check-in times and help poll workers quickly troubleshoot voters whose records aren't found—by providing a fast and secure way to digitally register a new voter, direct a confused voter to the correct precinct, or provide a provisional ballot.