

PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

May 27, 2023

The Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives
115 State St.
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Ms. Wrask:

Pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution, I am returning H.509, *An act relating to approval of amendments to the voter qualification provisions of the charter of the City of Burlington*, without my signature.

As I wrote when returning similar bills without signature in 2021, this highly variable town-by-town approach to municipal election policy creates separate and unequal classes of legal residents potentially eligible to vote on local voting issues. I am well aware of the recent Vermont Supreme Court decision, as well as a historic Vermont Supreme Court decision on the issue of constitutionality. I also have no objection to the policy direction. I am happy to see legal residents who are non-citizens calling Vermont home and participating in the issues affecting their communities.

However, the fundamentals of voting should be universal and implemented statewide. I again urge the Legislature to establish clarity and consistency on this matter with a template or uniform standards, before continuing to allow municipalities to move forward with changes to resident voter eligibility in their cities and towns. Returning this bill provides the opportunity to do this important work.

For these reasons, I am returning this legislation without my signature pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip B. Scott". The signature is stylized and written over a white rectangular area.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp