

The people of New Hampshire embody civic engagement.

We take pride in our public service, and constantly seek opportunities to move our state forward for everyone. We don't always agree with each other, but we respect those willing to share new ideas and include them as part of a broader discussion. It's born of an understanding that without fairness and inclusion, we cannot achieve our collective goals. Sadly, the effort to replace Secretary of State Bill Gardner is not about new ideas or forward thinking. It's about politics – plain and simple.

As former Governors, we have each had the opportunity to share the second floor of the state house with the Secretary of State. The office serves the people of our state as bills are passed and state records are kept. The Secretary of State does not play a role in the creation of policy, or which bills are passed into law. As the State's top election official, the Secretary of State is charged with safeguarding the integrity of the democratic process. We have each witnessed Bill Gardner, regardless of the makeup of New Hampshire government, execute these duties with absolute independence and incorruptible motive. Whether we have agreed with his position on a particular issue, Bill Gardner's perspective is one steeped in historical understanding, not partisan allegiance.

Every election cycle voter turnout in New Hampshire is among the highest in the nation. Every two years more than a thousand New Hampshire citizens run for elected office of one kind or another. These individuals, who are our neighbors, run trusting that the oversight of their election will be fair, unbiased, and nonpartisan. The hundreds of thousands of voters believe in this process. It is part of what makes New Hampshire so special. It is critical to safeguard this trust, by re-electing Secretary of State Bill Gardner.

All of these characteristics underscore the fundamental reason the Secretary of State is and must remain, to its core, nonpartisan. Every four years Presidential hopefuls come to New Hampshire to take part in the primary process. They do this because New Hampshire guarantees the opportunity to showcase ideas, and the chance to display contrast of values and character. It's an honest process that cannot be influenced by a Secretary of State that carries partisan agendas or desires. Make no mistake, the effort to replace Bill Gardner is a strategic political operation that threatens the independent foundation of the office, and New Hampshire's privileged place in the selection process.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of First-in-the-Nation primary, we must realize what's at stake for New Hampshire. Secretary Gardner has fiercely and successfully defended the primary throughout his tenure and has proven to be a trustworthy steward. Certainly, politics has an obvious place in New Hampshire's landscape. But it has no place in the Secretary of State's office.

Regardless of party affiliation, we strongly urge you to contact your Representative or Senator and ask that they vote for Bill Gardner on December 5th.

Hon. John Lynch
Hon. Stephen Merrill
Hon. Craig Benson
Hon. John H Sununu
Hon. Judd Gregg