

Letter: The needed steps for successful elections

Published: 5/7/2020 12:01:14 AM

As host of the first-in-the-nation presidential primary, New Hampshire has a lot at stake to make the 2020 elections go well. Our democracy depends on people being able to register and vote. COVID-19 means we must plan now to ensure that happens. At a minimum a plan should cover the following:

First, people will have to register to vote safely and with a minimum of red tape. If new rules and procedures are developed, Secretary of State Bill Gardner will be the one to ensure that people understand them, and that includes people who do not have access to internet or computers. He will have to develop a comprehensive education plan to communicate this new information effectively.

Second, we need to avoid a Wisconsin-type voting fiasco if we want to preserve our first-in-the-nation primary.

For absentee voting, the right number of ballots will have to be printed. Then we have to make sure everyone who wants an absentee ballot will get one in time to vote. We must be sure that all absentee ballots are counted.

For in-person voting there are a number of ways to make voting safe. Early voting would spread voters out over time and space; all poll workers need PPE; social distancing and disinfecting cleaning measures will be needed at the polls. And we need to recruit some new poll workers not in the “vulnerable” categories.

Finally, the public wants to know what progress is being made to provide safe and user-friendly registration and voting in 2020.

CLAUDIA DAMON

Concord