



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on July 7, 2023

Delaware Town's Bid to Let Corporations Vote Stonewalled, But Not Dead

In a case of small-town politics raising debate throughout the country, a measure to authorize a community to allow business entities to vote in municipal elections was [passed by the Delaware House of Representatives](#), although the Senate chose not to take it up — temporarily stonewalling the proposal, but leaving the door open for it to be revisited upon the reconvening of the General Assembly in January.

Under the bill, limited liability companies, corporations, and other business entities would have the vote in the city of Seaford in the southern region of the state. This change to the city's charter would put it in the company of at least four Delaware municipalities that already allow corporate entities to cast ballots in local elections.

Still other municipalities allow corporate entities to vote, but restrict them to participating in special elections related to items such as annexations or bond issues. Seaford is already one of more than a dozen Delaware cities that lets non-residents vote.

In Delaware, the state legislature approves charter changes requested by local governments. Typically, these approvals take place with little fanfare or debate. But the recent request was met with opposition from national groups such as Common Cause and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Within the Delaware House, the measure had enough support on both sides of the aisle to advance with a 35-6 vote, although the progressive wing of the Democrat Party was vociferous in opposing the proposal (Democrats currently have majorities in both houses of the legislature).

Republican Representative Danny Short, a former mayor of Seaford and the bill's chief sponsor, told Fox News he was surprised to see the bill become the subject of such controversy.

"This is not a new thing," Short said. "I don't know why people would criticize a simple charter bill."

Fox News detailed the way in which voting by corporate entities would function if the change to Seaford's charter were passed:

The charter change would allow nonresident voting by both a natural person or an artificial entity, the latter including corporations, partnerships, trusts and limited liability companies established in Delaware. Any such entity would have only one vote, no matter how many properties it might own.

In order to vote, an artificial entity would be required to certify the identities of all beneficial owners. Those names would be cross-referenced with voter registration lists to



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guard against multiple votes on behalf of related entities with common ownership.

Delaware is among 11 states where non-resident voting is allowed in local, municipal, or special elections.

Short argued that the purpose of the charter change is to boost economic recovery in Seaford, which took a major hit in 2004 after DuPont sold a manufacturing facility in the town, costing the community thousands of jobs and its reputation as the “Nylon Capital of the World.”

Elected officials in Seaford say business owners who have interests in the community but do not live there should be given a say in the city’s politics.

But opponents of the charter change, such as Claire Snyder-Hall, executive director of Common Cause Delaware, argue that it would disempower town residents and instead give undue influence to “wealthy outsiders.”

“In a state with more registered businesses than residents, this bill gives wealthy outsiders the power to override the actual people of Seaford,” Snyder Hall said.

Short shot back that the measure is popular with the people of the community and that those opposed to the charter change are the true outsiders who want to interfere with local political affairs.

“This is outside people trying to control an entity that actually has home rule,” Short contended. “In fact, it’s almost hypocritical what they’re doing.”

Another practice rapidly gaining traction in Democrat-run cities is non-citizen voting. This year, Burlington, Vermont, became the third city in the state to allow non-citizens who are legal residents to vote in local elections. In response, Vermont Republicans have argued that the policy of letting noncitizens vote for school board members has statewide implications, thus violating the state’s constitution, which states that only U.S. citizens can vote on “any matter that concerns the State of Vermont.”

Maryland also has several municipalities that allow voting by non-citizens, including Barnesville, Cheverly, Chevy Chase Section 3, Garrett Park, Glen Echo, Hyattsville, and others. Notably, all of these are near Washington, D.C.

D.C. also lets non-citizens vote, although House Republicans recently introduced a resolution that would put an end to the practice in the nation’s capital.

Meanwhile, Connecticut earlier this year [considered a bill](#) that would have amended the state constitution to “allow undocumented immigrants who are residents of the state to be admitted as electors for purposes of voting in municipal and state elections.”

History has shown that when those opposed to constitutional republican government are unable to get the result they want through the vote, one of their tactics is to change the voting demographic. The Left’s attempt to do just that now appears to be accelerating.



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