

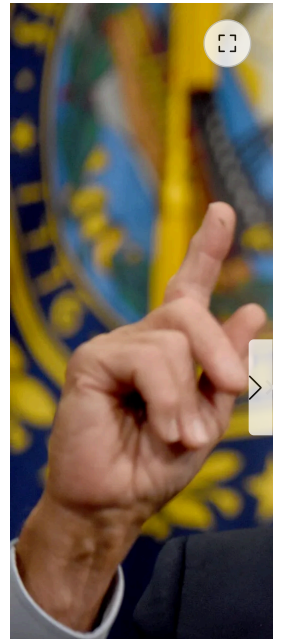
No ICE expected at NH polls on Tuesday, officials say



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Frances Donahue, second from right, of Merrimack and Charlene Puzzo of Meredith, second from left, speak with Secretary of State David Scanlan, left, and former Congressmen Charlie Bass, center, and Dick Swett, right, at AARP New Hampshire's Elections in the Age of AI Forum at the New Hampshire Institute of Politics in Goffstown on Thursday. DAVID LANE/UNION LEADER



Former U.S. Rep. Charlie Bass
New Hampshire

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There's no indication that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers will be at the polls for Tuesday's statewide primary, Secretary of State David Scanlan said Thursday.

Federal election observers, however, are expected to be in the Granite State's two biggest cities — Manchester and Nashua — for the primary and the Nov. 3 midterm election, he said.

"I have heard nothing that leads me to believe that ICE is going to be at polling places in New Hampshire," Scanlan said. "What I am hearing is there may be a presence of monitors, which will basically be observers."

Manchester and Nashua are among more than a dozen cities nationwide where the U.S. Department of Justice will monitor voters casting ballots.

"We welcome anybody that wants to observe our great process here in New Hampshire," Scanlan said Thursday during an AARP event on artificial intelligence, elections, misinformation and public trust hosted by the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College in Goffstown.

The forum featured not just Scanlan, but also former Congressmen Dick Swett and Charlie Bass, who each represented New Hampshire's 2nd Congressional District.

"I don't know that it's ICE that is being utilized in this process," Swett said.

Swett, a Democrat, and Bass, a Republican, now represent the Democracy Defense Foundation in New Hampshire and said they hope to reinforce public trust in the electoral system.

"I know that we can prove the validity and the value of how we do our elections," Swett said. "There is no place for intimidation of voters from any organization."

Bass, who served in Congress for 14 years, said he disagrees with suggestions that elections in the United States ought to be federalized and pointed to the success achieved by local volunteers in managing elections at the state level.

He said President Donald Trump asking federal agencies to enforce existing law that already criminalizes non-citizens from voting and threatening to federalize elections only delegitimizes state and local election workers in the minds of voters.

"The Post Office is a good carrier; they are not good administrators. To ask that independent agency to take over the jobs that all these volunteers do in every town around this state — watching each other, getting it right — is a terrible idea," Bass said. "Don't federalize the election process."

Scanlan repeatedly emphasized the level of public participation in the mechanisms of elections in New Hampshire and insisted that election integrity is high here.

Swett characterized the public trust in government as being "at an all-time low."

A Gallup poll, published Wednesday, suggests that up to 89% of U.S. adults believe government corruption is widespread, an increase of 10 percentage points since 2025.

For Swett, a growing lack of trust in elections and government, more broadly, has much to do with people's perception that politicians do not act upon promises made to constituents.

"People vote for certain candidates because of certain issues, and if those issues are never moved upon, if they're never successfully arbitrated or litigated or legislated in the general body, that drives people away from participation in government and the faith that they have that government can do good works for the broader community," Swett said in an interview with the Union Leader.

The goal of the Democracy Defense Foundation is to bring accurate information to voters about how elections work to restore public trust. For what it's worth, Swett said he's optimistic.

"The changes that need to happen are making sure that the connection between legislation and the legislator and the public are strong and true and transparent and fair. That is why we need basic, good election law. We need basic, fair and transparent elections," Swett said. "New Hampshire does that very well and so I'm very excited to go around the state and talk to people about those things."

"I think New Hampshire could be a very good example to the rest of the country, too," Swett added.

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