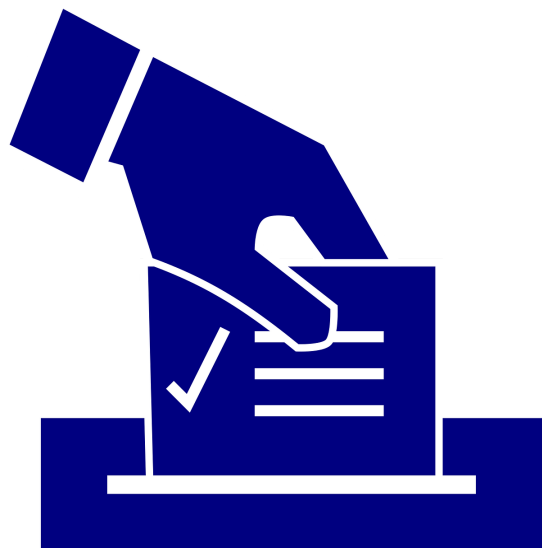




Weare in the World

SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION EDITION

August 31, 2022



Election Information

Important dates

Sept. 13: N.H. State Primary

Nov. 8: N.H. General Election

Voting location

Weare Middle School Gymnasium

7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

More information

Absentee ballots are available at the Weare Town Clerk's office. Forms to request are online at <https://www.weare.nh.gov/town-clerk>.

Note: the office will be closed on Sept. 13.



For this Special Primary Election Edition, *Weare in the World* invited the local candidates running for state office to participate in a survey so that their views are shared with

voters. The survey questions were developed by our volunteer staff and sent to all candidates, who were given an overall 750-word limit. Attempts to reach all candidates were made by email, phone or both. Responses were lightly edited for grammar and style.

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Two open seats

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One open seat

Charlene Lovett (D)

Ruth Ward (R)

State Representative, Hillsborough County District 28



Name: Leah Cushman
Political party: Republican (incumbent)
Years living in Weare: 5
Occupation: Registered Nurse
Contact:
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www.LeahCushman.com;
[Facebook.com/Leah4NH](https://www.facebook.com/Leah4NH)

1. What are your community involvements/affiliations?
 Weare Board of Fire Wards; Weare Taxpayers Coalition; Weare Republican Committee

2. Identify the top one or two issues you feel most strongly about and how you would address them if elected. Right now, most people are feeling financial strain from inflation. Families are struggling to pay their bills. It is so important that we do whatever we can in New Hampshire to help alleviate that strain and prevent any further damage from overreaching federal regulations. Short-term “solutions” too often lead to long-term problems. Reducing tax burden on people, reducing regulatory burden on businesses that increase costs to consumers and reducing wasteful government spending that is driving inflation will all help the economic resilience of the state. I will be supporting these initiatives in legislation if re-elected.

3. What legislative measures would you support to ensure that Weare students continue receiving a high-quality education? I would support legislation that would expand education options for students and that which would encourage innovation in public schools. Additionally, it’s important to empower parents in their children’s education and I would support bills that strengthen parental rights.

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce gun violence, and are there legislative actions you would propose or support? New Hampshire is one of the safest states in the country, with Constitutional carry in place. Weare is in the top five safest towns, even with all the “booms.” Any tool can be used for evil. There are problems with the justice system that remain to be solved. I would support legislation to restore the rule of law by eliminating catch-and-release for violent criminals. Additionally, the mental health crisis continues and has only worsened over the last two years. People are canceling their gym

memberships, going out less and increasing their credit card debt. This is why it’s so important to support legislation that promotes economic vitality. It is difficult for people to thrive, help others, or focus on their mental health when they’re preoccupied with just getting by.

5. With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade leaving abortion laws up to the states, what is your position? The U.S. Supreme Court made the right decision in handing the abortion issue back to the states. Our 424-member New Hampshire Legislature is the most representative governing body in the nation. In 2021, this legislature of The People passed the Fetal Life Protection Act that limits abortions after 24 weeks (about six months) gestation. This legislation had widespread support, including among people who consider themselves to be pro-choice. I supported this legislation and would vote against attempts to weaken it if re-elected. The overturning of Roe v. Wade does not change anything in New Hampshire as far as access to abortion.

6. What experience do you have working well with those who have opposing views, and what examples can you provide of successful political compromise? Serving on the House Health, Human Services, and Elderly Affairs Committee, I have worked continuously with legislators across the aisle. We don’t always agree, but we respect each other and the important work we are doing. I worked closely with my colleagues on the other side in amending legislation that guides pharmacist administration of vaccinations (HB572), a bill that requires patients to be allowed visitors in the hospital (HB1439), my own bill to allow pharmacists to dispense the drug Ivermectin via a standing order (HB1022), and on one requiring consent for private health information to be collected by the government (HB1606), plus numerous other bills. It’s important to maintain integrity to one’s principles and not waver for the sake of getting along, but it is also really nice when there is true middle ground on an issue and we can work together to get the people’s business done.



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Name: Keith Erf
Political party: Republican (incumbent)
Years living in Weare: 41
Occupation: Business
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1. What are your community involvements/affiliations?

My wife and I have lived in Weare for over 40 years, raised four children here and have been involved in many local and school organizations. I formerly served on the Weare Finance Committee and have served as a N.H. State Representative from Weare since January 2019.

2. Identify the top one or two issues you feel most strongly about and how you would address them if elected.

As current Vice Chair of the Finance Committee working on Health and Human Services (DHHS), we cut over \$171 million in taxes, reduced spending by \$172 million and increased funds sent back to Weare to provide property tax relief. With your vote, I will continue to work to build on decreasing the cost of government. In addition to my work on the Finance Committee, I sponsored two bills: one "relative to the expectation of privacy" and the second "prohibiting surveillance by the state on public ways or sidewalks." Both have passed the House, only to be held up in the Senate. I also opposed vaccine mandates, mask mandates, lockdowns and other emergency measures restricting the liberty of our residents. If re-elected, I will continue working to protect the freedoms and privacy of our citizens.

3. What legislative measures would you support to ensure that Weare students continue receiving a high-quality education?

I supported Education Freedom accounts that were signed into law last year, providing lower-income parents access to state education funds associated with their children to attend educational opportunities better suited to those children. We provided parents the ability to take action against their school that doesn't adequately protect their child from bullying. We fully funded catastrophic aid for special education and provided funding for career and technical education and transportation aid to school districts. We also provided over \$500,000 in direct property tax relief to Weare by reducing the statewide education property tax (SWEPT) by that amount this year. I support ongoing expansion of programs such as these, as well as the Learn Everywhere program, that assure all children can access the best

educational opportunities available. This includes expanding the Children's Scholarship for lower-income families that we passed in the House this year, but didn't become law.

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce gun violence, and are there legislative actions you would propose or support? New Hampshire is the second safest state in the country, according to a 2022 Consumer Affairs study, even safer than Canada as measured by homicides per capita. The best thing that can be done to reduce gun violence is to assure that criminals who illegally obtain guns or use guns when committing crimes are sent to prison. I will support bills that do this.

5. With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade leaving abortion laws up to the states, what is your position?

In 2021, I voted for passage of New Hampshire's abortion ban after 24 weeks, with an exception for the physical health of the mother. This was signed into law and became effective this year. This summer, a law was signed making clear that ultrasounds are not required for early-term abortions as claimed by some. New Hampshire's abortion law is compatible with the Roe v. Wade decision. The overturning of Roe v. Wade has no impact on New Hampshire abortion law.

6. What experience do you have working well with those who have opposing views, and what examples can you provide of successful political compromise?

This past year, I worked with Democrats on the Finance Committee and the Health and Human Services Committee, as well as the DHHS Medicaid Director and DHHS Medicaid Dental Director, to develop spending guardrails in the Medicaid dental benefit bill. This originally passed the House without the limitations and without my support. The changes included limiting annual non-preventative services to \$1,500 per year and requiring legislative approval to make changes to the program. These were included in the final bill that became law.



Name: David Erikson
Political party: Democrat
Years living in Weare: 42
Occupation: Carpenter; retired middle school Tech. Ed. / woodshop teacher
Contact:
 daviderikson4weare@gmail.com

1. What are your community involvements/affiliations?

I served on the planning board and the solid waste committee. I volunteer at the library and for a local land conservation
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group. I have been a member of the Weare Friends (Quakers) for decades. I have been active canvassing for Democrats since 2004 and have been very involved with the Weare Democratic Committee.

2. Identify the top one or two issues you feel most strongly about and how you would address them if elected. Quality public schools are how we develop the next generation of workers, leaders and build functional communities. There is a radical and influential group of legislators who are working to privatize education. The voucher program they have created not only takes money from our public school districts, it is a handout to parents earning six-figure incomes. Most of the children who received the money were already home-schooled, or attending private schools - often religious schools. I will work for fair funding for all children in New Hampshire so the quality of their schools doesn't depend on where they live or how much money their parents earn. Healthcare should be a right, not a privilege, for those who can pay. We need to guarantee reproductive healthcare to all in New Hampshire, including contraception and access to abortion. Democrats in Congress just got the PACT Act passed to ensure care for veterans who were exposed to toxins during their service.

3. What legislative measures would you support to ensure that Weare students continue receiving a high-quality education? I will vote to repeal the current voucher program or modify it to restrict the vouchers to those with a greatest need. I will also work to support more fair and equitable funding of public education to put less of a burden on property taxes. If we roll back the recent tax cuts on big business and the wealthy, we can fund public education fairly for all.

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce gun violence, and are there legislative actions you would propose or support? Restrictions on military-style weapons must be worked out at the federal level. In New Hampshire, we can require background checks, stop the sale of high-capacity magazines and other modifications that make guns more lethal to humans. Hunters have accepted a limit on the number of rounds allowed when hunting deer and birds. Certainly we can come to agreement to keep the most lethal weapons out of the hands of those most likely to use them against human targets and to increase access to mental health services to help prevent suicides and other violent use of guns.

5. With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade leaving abortion laws up to the states, what is your position? Abortion must be safe, accessible and affordable for all who need it.

Family planning services should be supported through adequate funding to provide contraception for those who want it, as well as affordable screening and preventative healthcare services.

6. What experience do you have working well with those who have opposing views, and what examples can you provide of successful political compromise? I taught in several public schools in New Hampshire. In one school where I taught a section of U.S. History as well as Tech. Ed., the principal – whom I respected as a fair administrator and, earlier in her career, a fine teacher for my two sons – was more conservative than me. She assigned me to teach the 19th Century, which had been understood to be almost all about the Civil War. I suggested that I also lead the eighth graders to learn about Native Americans, the beginnings of the women's rights movement and history of technology. At first she was opposed, but as we discussed our different approaches, she supported me in taking graduate courses to become highly qualified in U.S. History and we agreed I would include a good understanding of the Civil War and other topics brewing during those years. Those who know me know I seek out and try to understand the opposing point of view. At times, both liberals and conservatives need to rethink or compromise. Understanding each other's positions is essential to reaching creative solutions, sometimes ones neither had thought of before. When elected, I will continue to listen to all views and try to address the concerns of all Weare residents.



Name: William Politt

Political party: Democratic

Years living in Weare: I have lived in the same home in North Weare for 38 years.

Occupation: I am retired after 40+ years in sales. I have been a substitute teacher for 11 years.

Contact: politt4weare@gmail.com

1. What are your community involvements/affiliations? I have been deeply involved in public education: first as a parent, then as a grandparent, and as a substitute teacher. In March, I was elected to the Weare School Board, my first run for elective office.

2. Identify the top one or two issues you feel most strongly about and how you would address them if elected. I have always argued against the closing of minds. I will work to oppose censorship in public discourse, including our schools and libraries. I have been blessed
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with a "one man, one wonderful woman" marriage for 38 years. We raised two wanted daughters and both of them have brought up two wanted children. I understand that not everybody's lives are in the same mold, and I will defend to the end their rights to make their own life-decisions.

3. What legislative measures would you support to ensure that Weare students continue receiving a high-quality education? It is a three-part problem. First, the formula by which the state funds our public schools is totally inadequate. This results in immense inequalities between districts and back-breakingly burdensome property taxes. This needs to be addressed. Second, the state cannot bleed ever-increasing sums from the already meager public education funds and send them off to private and/or religious schools. Third, we must repeal, among others, HB 544, the "divisive concepts" law.

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce gun violence, and are there legislative actions you would propose or support? As a 40-year recreational shooter and competitor for 30 years, I am wary of blanket bans, especially when drafted by people with little understanding of the subject. I will support a well designed "red light law" to remove (I would expect temporarily) firearms from persons recognized to be a danger to themselves or others. I would also support universal background checks for all gun transfers. As a former federally licensed firearms dealer, I see that as reasonable and sensible.

5. With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade leaving abortion laws up to the states, what is your position? I am firmly opposed to strangers, including any government agency at any level coming between a woman and her own health decisions.

6. What experience do you have working well with those who have opposing views, and what examples can you provide of successful political compromise? There is no more opposing view than a customer who says, "No." A lifetime in sales has taught me how vital it is to listen openly and sincerely in order to find a path to "Yes." If we all can see the value in another's position, we can build a consensus in which everybody gains.

State Representative, Hillsborough Country District 44, Goffstown/Weare

Name: Travis Corcoran
Political party: Republican
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Survey not returned

Name: Gary Hopper
Political party: Republican (incumbent)
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<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/member.aspx?member=376353>
Survey not returned



Name: Judith Gaynor Johnson
 (please call me Judy)
Political party: Democrat
Years living in Weare: As a Weare neighbor, I have lived in Goffstown for 33 years
Occupation: Wedding officiant – Justice of the Peace, retired public school teacher
Contact:

judithgaynorjohnson@gmail.com

1. What are your community involvements/affiliations?
 For nearly 20 years, I was a volunteer at the Manchester/Allard Center YMCA. I worked as an aerobics instructor, gymnastic coach and raising money for the Reach Out for Youth Campaign. I taught Confirmation CCD at St. Lawrence Church in Goffstown. Currently, I am a volunteer docent for the Manchester Millyard Museum.

2. Identify the top one or two issues you feel most strongly about and how you would address them if elected. I was a high school teacher for 26 years and I know first-hand how difficult and emotional the work of a teacher is and how poorly public education in New Hampshire is funded. What I find to be so disheartening is the amount of disrespect, misinformation and the lack of support I have seen over the years towards certified teachers working in our public-school system. The number one reason I decided to run is to be a voice and advocate of our public schools, teachers, students and parents and stop the funneling of our hard-earned tax dollars to private schools. I will fight and defend all legislation that keeps our public tax dollars going to only public schools.

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3. What legislative measures would you support to ensure that Weare students continue receiving a high-quality education? The Weare School District's motto, "Preparing Students for the Future," being a collaborative effort between parents, teachers, students and the community, exemplifies the best in public education. The reason public education exists is to provide the tools necessary to be productive citizens, which is essential to the success of our communities. As your state representative, I will support all legislative efforts to ensure that public schools are the number one priority so that students continue to receive a high-quality education.

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce gun violence, and are there legislative actions you would propose or support? In my view, there are several areas that can be addressed in reducing gun violence. I believe in raising the age to purchase any gun to 21 and for stronger red flag laws. I support banning all assault weapons and closing all loopholes in gun sales. I support the licensing of gun owners and before obtaining such a license, they must complete a gun training class as well as required continuing education. Lastly, I support legislation to require permits to conceal carry and do not support open carry.

5. With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade leaving abortion laws up to the states, what is your position? Any decision that a woman makes should only be between her and her doctor, not a politician.

6. What experience do you have working well with those who have opposing views, and what examples can you provide of successful political compromise? The best example I have is a recent two-hour conversation I had with my brother-in-law (a former California State Trooper) who is an avid proponent of gun ownership and a long-time NRA member. He owns several handguns and long guns for recreational use and is responsible in keeping them locked up in their home. I listened to his reasoning, though I did not agree with some of his justifications. For instance, on the open carry, which I do not agree with, he thinks that people are safer from criminals. He believes that when criminals see someone else with a gun, they may decide not to use theirs. I explained to him that when I see someone carrying an open gun in a store or restaurant I become extremely frightened because I do not know if they are a good guy or bad guy. Though we disagreed on some issues, I came away with a deeper understanding of his views on gun ownership. I was happy to learn we both agree on stronger reg flag laws, increasing the age of purchase to 21

and states sharing databases of violent criminals and those facing a felony. Ultimately, we both agreed that laws should be in place to keep ourselves and families safe.



Name: David Trumble

Political party: Democrat

Years living in Weare: 25

Occupation: Organic farmer, college debate coach

Contact: trumble4nh@gmail.com, (603) 529-2170

1. What are your community involvements/affiliations? My wife,

Linda, and I built our home and farm in Weare. Our two children attended the Weare public schools. We run a small business in town, selling seedlings and vegetables. As a stay-at-home dad, I volunteered in the schools for many years. When our children were young, we started LEGO clubs at the schools. We also started a jump rope club and competition team. We did "Farmer in the School" projects with kindergarteners.

2. Identify the top one or two issues you feel most strongly about and how you would address them if elected. First, investing in education and supporting our teachers and students. Second, property tax relief for senior citizens. There was a budget surplus this past term. Instead of tax cuts for the wealthy, we should provide property tax relief for senior citizens so they can remain in their homes. Third, making New Hampshire a healthy and welcoming state for all, especially young people. To do this, we must raise the minimum wage to a living wage, increase access to affordable childcare and housing, protect LGBTQ+ rights, work for social justice for all people, provide healthcare for everyone (including mental health care) and adopt a climate change policy that vigorously promotes renewable energy. Addressing climate change now will cost us less in the short term and the long term.

3. What legislative measures would you support to ensure that Weare students continue receiving a high-quality education? First, public dollars should go to public schools. The legislature adopted a voucher program for private schools that spent 70 times over budget (estimated \$130,000 to actual \$10 million), taking funds from an education trust fund for our public schools. Second, we should trust our teachers. We should support teachers' freedom to teach the truth to our children about our nation's history and to neutrally discuss important social issues as well. Third, the state needs to ensure that

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all schools receive enough funds to provide children with an adequate education.

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce gun violence, and are there legislative actions you would propose or support? As a farmer, I support the right of people to own guns for hunting and self-protection. However, guns are a public health crisis. They are the number one cause of death for children in the U.S., more dangerous than overdoses, drowning or automobile accidents. As parents, we make sure our children buckle their seat belts, know how to swim and avoid dangerous drugs. But they are more likely to die from a gun. Over the last 10 years, gun deaths nationally have grown from 33,000 to 50,000 deaths per year. New Hampshire is part of this national public health crisis. In New Hampshire, someone dies from a gun every two and a half days. We need to sit at the table and have an honest discussion about guns. Solutions to promote gun safety will require us to work together. For legislation, I support universal background checks, a seven-day waiting period to purchase guns, strengthening the safe storage law (Child Access Prevention), strengthening the restrictions against defendants with a temporary domestic violence protective order from possessing or purchasing guns, prohibiting the manufacture of "ghost guns" (3-D printers) and increasing programs and funding levels for mental health and suicide prevention services.

5. With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade leaving abortion laws up to the states, what is your position?

Women should have autonomy over their own bodies. People should have the right to access reproductive health care, including access to abortion and birth control. Decisions regarding abortion should be left to a person who is pregnant to make on their own, with the advice of their doctor. N.H. should pass legislation that affirms reproductive rights; protects medical providers and patients from out-of-state legal actions; and that fully funds Planned Parenthood. Reproductive rights and access to health care, including abortion and contraception, should apply equally to all LGBTQ+ people.

6. What experience do you have working well with those who have opposing views, and what examples can you provide of successful political compromise? I have been a college debate coach for 43 years, helping my students see both sides of the issues. I am a good listener and if elected, will listen to you. I would be honored to serve Weare and Goffstown as a representative in the State House.

State Senate, District 8

Represents 24 communities, including Weare



Name: Charlene Marcotte Lovett

Political party: Democratic

Residence: Claremont

Occupation: Retired 22-year Army veteran

Contact: 443-538-9977

1. What are your community involvements/affiliations?

I have served at all levels of government, including the Claremont School Board, N.H. House of Representatives and the City Council, six of the eight years as mayor. As mayor, I was a member of two national coalitions: Cities Thrive and Climate Mayors. I was also Chair of the Valley Regional Hospital Board of Trustees and the River Valley Community College Advisory Committee. Currently, I am the Vice Chair of the Claremont Housing Authority Commission, a board member of West Central Behavioral Health, a member of the N.H. Legal Aid Campaign Leadership Council, the Historian at American Legion Post 29, a charter member of the Claremont-Sugar River Rotary and a member of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition N.H. Advisory Committee.

2. Identify the top one or two issues you feel most strongly about and how you would address them if elected. We need to focus on the economy and address rising costs in housing, childcare and healthcare. We also need to accelerate the transition to renewable energy. I will support legislation that incentivizes the development of affordable housing, promotes better wages for childcare services, expands access to affordable healthcare and invests in renewable energy infrastructure.

3. What legislative measures would you support to ensure that Weare students continue receiving a high-quality education? Public education funding must be addressed in a way that all students have access to an adequate education regardless of where they live. If elected, I would work towards a more equitable partnership between the state and municipalities, providing tax relief to local property owners. I would also support legislation that expands career pathways (i.e. apprenticeships) and supports technical centers.

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce gun violence, and are there legislative actions you would propose or support? As a veteran and gun owner, I am an advocate of gun safety. We need to have universal
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background checks and red flag laws, and effectively address inappropriate access to high-capacity firepower.

5. With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade leaving abortion laws up to the states, what is your position? Because of the overturning of Roe v. Wade, states are now responsible for protecting reproductive rights. If elected, I would vote to codify those rights.

6. What experience do you have working well with those who have opposing views, and what examples can you provide of successful political compromise? As mayor, I was often dealing with situations in which people held opposing views. My approach in these situations is to understand the issue, bring stakeholders together and identify common goals. This approach was successful in the prevention of childhood lead poisoning prevention, expansion of renewable energy, investment in housing, infrastructure and the school district.



Name: Ruth Ward
Political party: Republican
 (incumbent)
Residence: Stoddard
Occupation: Retired; N.H. State Senator
Contact: ruthward@myfairpoint.net;
 603-933-0018

1. What are your community involvements/affiliations? Local river advisory board. Southwest Regional Planning Commission's Transportation, Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee

2. Identify the top one or two issues you feel most strongly about and how you would address them if elected. Top-notch education for New Hampshire children. Provide opportunities to choose the education program that's the best fit for the child.

3. What legislative measures would you support to ensure that Weare students continue receiving a high-quality education? Hire the best teachers; make sure the parents are involved in educational choices.

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce gun violence, and are there legislative actions you would propose or support? Mental health seems to be an issue, and more awareness of a person's behavior should be a

way of looking for possible problems. Parents have to be involved. I would not restrict the second amendment.

5. With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade leaving abortion laws up to the states, what is your position? In New Hampshire, abortion is legal up to 24 weeks. Rather than risking an abortion, girls and women should be taught how not to get pregnant. I support abortion in rape or if the mother's life is at risk.

6. What experience do you have working well with those who have opposing views, and what examples can you provide of successful political compromise? You have to listen and respectfully discuss differences.



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