



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 500

January Session, 2021

Substitute House Bill No. 6325

House of Representatives, April 19, 2021

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. FOX of the 148th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE,
ABSENTEE BALLOTS AND ELECTION AUDITS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force
2 to study the feasibility of implementing procedures whereby an
3 absentee ballot applicant uses a single envelope, instead of two, for the
4 return of such applicant's absentee ballot. Such study shall include an
5 examination and identification of each section of the general statutes
6 that would require amending in order to implement such procedures.

7 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

8 (1) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

9 (2) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

10 (3) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
11 Representatives;

- 12 (4) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;
- 13 (5) One appointed by the House of Representatives chairperson of the
14 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
15 matters relating to elections;
- 16 (6) One appointed by the Senate chairperson of the joint standing
17 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
18 relating to elections;
- 19 (7) One appointed by the House of Representatives ranking member
20 of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
21 cognizance of matters relating to elections;
- 22 (8) One appointed by the Senate ranking member of the joint standing
23 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
24 relating to elections;
- 25 (9) The Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee;
- 26 (10) Two appointed by the president of the Registrars of Voters
27 Association of Connecticut, each of whom shall be enrolled in a different
28 political party from the other; and
- 29 (11) One appointed by the president of the Connecticut Town Clerks
30 Association.
- 31 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
32 (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) or (8) of subsection (b) of this section may be a
33 member of the General Assembly.
- 34 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
35 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
36 be filled by the appointing authority.
- 37 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
38 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
39 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
40 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty

41 days after the effective date of this section.

42 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
43 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections
44 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

45 (g) Not later than January 1, 2022, the task force shall submit a report
46 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of
47 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
48 elections, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
49 general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it
50 submits such report or January 1, 2022, whichever is later.

51 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a working group
52 to (1) examine employing risk-limiting audits to determine the accuracy
53 of election results, including (A) the feasibility of implementing such
54 audits, (B) the different methods used in such audits and the practical
55 considerations for implementation of each such method within the
56 existing statutory framework, (C) any potential equipment necessary to
57 implement one or more of such methods, (D) the procedures necessary
58 to implement one or more of such methods, and (E) any changes to such
59 statutory framework necessary to implement one or more of such
60 methods, and (2) within available appropriations, oversee a pilot
61 program in not less than five and not more than ten municipalities of
62 one or more of such methods for the municipal elections held in such
63 municipalities in 2021.

64 (b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

65 (1) The Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee, who shall
66 be the chairperson of such working group;

67 (2) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

68 (3) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

69 (4) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
70 Representatives;

- 71 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;
- 72 (6) Two appointed by the chairpersons and ranking members of the
73 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
74 matters relating to elections, each of whom shall be enrolled in a
75 different political party from the other;
- 76 (7) Two appointed by the Secretary of the State, one of whom shall be
77 admitted to the practice of law in this state and have expertise in the
78 election laws of this state, and the other of whom shall be a statistician;
- 79 (8) Two appointed by the president of the Registrars of Voters
80 Association of Connecticut, each of whom shall be enrolled in a different
81 political party from the other; and
- 82 (9) The director of the Center for Voting Technology Research at The
83 University of Connecticut, or the director's designee.
- 84 (c) Any member of the working group appointed under subdivision
85 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
86 of the General Assembly.
- 87 (d) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not
88 later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy
89 shall be filled by the appointing authority.
- 90 (e) The Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee, as
91 chairperson of the working group, shall schedule the first meeting of
92 such working group, which shall be held not later than sixty days after
93 the effective date of this section.
- 94 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
95 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections
96 shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.
- 97 (g) Not later than January 31, 2022, the working group shall submit a
98 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing
99 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters

100 relating to elections, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
101 of the general statutes, and to the Secretary of the State. The working
102 group shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January
103 31, 2022, whichever is later.

104 Sec. 3. Section 9-374 of the general statutes is repealed and the
105 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

106 No authority of the state or any political subdivision thereof having
107 jurisdiction over the conduct of any primary shall permit the name of a
108 party-endorsed candidate for an office or position to be printed on the
109 official ballot to be used at any such primary unless a copy of the party
110 rules regulating such party and its method of selecting party-endorsed
111 candidates for nomination to such office or for election as town
112 committee members, as the case may be, has been filed in the office of
113 the Secretary of the State at least sixty days before such candidate is
114 selected under such method of endorsement. The selection of delegates
115 to conventions shall not be valid unless at least one copy of the party
116 rules regulating the manner of making such selection has been filed in
117 the office of the Secretary of the State at least sixty days before such
118 selection is made. A duplicate copy of such rules shall also be filed with
119 the state central committee of such party. A copy of the local party rules,
120 relating to a party in a municipality, shall be filed forthwith by the town
121 chairman or the secretary of the town committee of such party in such
122 municipality with the Secretary of the State. The state party rules shall
123 be filed by the state chairman or the secretary of the state central
124 committee of such party. In the case of a minor party, no authority of
125 the state or any subdivision thereof having jurisdiction over the conduct
126 of any election shall permit the name of a candidate of such party for
127 any office to be printed on the official ballot unless at least one copy of
128 the party rules regulating the manner of nominating a candidate for
129 such office has been filed in the office of the Secretary of the State at least
130 [sixty] one hundred eighty days before the nomination of such
131 candidate. In the case of a minor party, the selection of town committee
132 members and delegates to conventions shall not be valid unless at least
133 one copy of the party rules regulating the manner of making such

134 selection has been filed in the office of the Secretary of the State at least
 135 sixty days before such selection is made. A copy of local party rules shall
 136 forthwith be also filed with the town clerk of the municipality to which
 137 they relate. Party rules shall not be effective until sixty days after the
 138 filing of the same with the Secretary of the State. A party in any
 139 municipality for which local party rules with respect to any office or
 140 position have not been filed as provided in this section shall, as to such
 141 office or position, be subject to the provisions of the effective state rules
 142 of such party applicable in municipalities which do not have local party
 143 rules, until such time as local party rules therefor are filed and become
 144 effective as provided in this section. The town chairman of a party in
 145 any municipality for which local party rules have not been adopted and
 146 filed as provided in this section shall forthwith file a statement with the
 147 Secretary of the State to the effect that such party in such municipality
 148 does not have local party rules. The term "party rules" as used in this
 149 section includes any amendment to such party rules. When any
 150 amendment is to be filed as required by this section, complete party
 151 rules incorporating such amendment shall be filed, together with a
 152 separate copy of such amendment.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	9-374

GAE *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Explanation

This bill establishes a task force to study the feasibility of implementing procedures under which absentee ballot applicants return absentee ballots using one envelope, and a working group to examine risk-limiting audits and oversee a related pilot program, within available appropriations, in five to ten municipalities for the 2021 municipal elections.

A municipality may incur minimal costs to take part in the pilot program; however, as the pilot program is voluntary it is assumed that a municipality would participate only to the extent it has available resources.

The establishment of a task force has no fiscal impact as PA 17-236 prohibits transportation allowances for task force members.

Lastly, the bill also moves up the deadline by which minor parties must file a copy of their party rules with the Secretary of the State, from at least 60 days to at least 180 days, before nominating candidates for office. This provision has no fiscal impact.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6325*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE,
ABSENTEE BALLOTS AND ELECTION AUDITS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill establishes a (1) task force to study the feasibility of implementing procedures under which absentee ballot applicants return absentee ballots using one envelope, instead of two, and (2) working group to examine risk-limiting audits and oversee a related pilot program, within available appropriations, in five to 10 municipalities for the 2021 municipal elections.

The bill also moves up the deadline by which minor parties must file a copy of their party rules with the secretary of the state, from at least 60 days to at least 180 days, before nominating candidates for office. "Party rules" include any amendments to them.

By law, minor parties must nominate candidates and certify the list of candidates no later than 62 days before the election (e.g., September 20, 2020) (CGS § 9-452). A copy of the party rules must be on file with the secretary by the deadline in order for a nominated candidate's name to appear on the official ballot.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 1 — TASK FORCE ON ABSENTEE BALLOT ENVELOPES

The bill establishes a 12-member task force to study the feasibility of implementing procedures under which absentee ballot applicants return absentee ballots using one envelope, instead of two. The study must examine and identify each section of the general statutes that requires amending to implement these procedures.

Membership

Under the bill, the task force consists of the following members:

1. the secretary of the state, or her designee;
2. one member each appointed by the Senate president pro tempore, House speaker, and Senate and House minority leaders;
3. one member each appointed by the Government Administration and Elections Committee chairpersons and ranking members;
4. two members, enrolled in different political parties, appointed by the president of the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut; and
5. one member appointed by the president of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association.

Initial appointments must be made no later than 30 days after the bill's passage. Legislative appointments may be legislators and appointing authorities fill vacancies. The House speaker and Senate president pro tempore must select the task force chairpersons from among its members.

Meeting, Staff, and Reporting

The bill requires the chairpersons to hold the task force's first meeting no later than 60 days after the bill's passage. The Government Administration and Elections Committee administrative staff serve as the task force's administrative staff.

By January 1, 2022, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Government Administration and Elections Committee. It terminates on that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

§ 2 — WORKING GROUP ON RISK-LIMITING AUDITS

The bill establishes a 12-member working group on risk-limiting audits. The group's purpose is to (1) look at using risk-limiting audits to determine the accuracy of election results and (2) oversee a pilot

program, within available appropriations, in five to 10 municipalities on one or more risk-limiting audit methods for the 2021 municipal elections.

As part of its work, the working group must at least examine the following:

1. the feasibility of implementing risk-limiting audits;
2. different methods used in these audits and the practical considerations for implementing each method within Connecticut's existing statutory framework; and
3. procedures, potential equipment, and changes to the statutory framework necessary to implement one or more of these methods.

Membership

Under the bill, the working group consists of the following members:

1. the secretary of the state, or her designee;
2. one member each appointed by the Senate president pro tempore, House speaker, and Senate and House minority leaders;
3. two members, enrolled in different political parties, appointed by the Government Administration and Elections Committee chairpersons and ranking members;
4. two members appointed by the secretary of the state, one with election law expertise and admitted to practice law in Connecticut, and the other a statistician;
5. two members, enrolled in different political parties, appointed by the president of the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut; and
6. the director of UConn's Center for Voting Technology Research, or the director's designee.

Initial appointments must be made no later than 30 days after the bill's passage. Legislative appointments may be legislators and appointing authorities fill vacancies. The secretary of the state, or her designee, serves as the chairperson.

Meeting, Staff, and Reporting

The bill requires the secretary of the state, or her designee, to hold the task force's first meeting no later than 60 days after the bill's passage. The Government Administration and Elections Committee administrative staff serve as the task force's administrative staff.

By January 31, 2022, the working group must report its findings and recommendations to the Government Administration and Elections Committee and to the secretary of the state. It terminates on that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 18 Nay 1 (03/31/2021)