
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5379

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES RELATED TO REGISTRARS OF VOTERS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes affecting election administration. Principally, it does the following:

1. allows registrars of voters to provide notice of voter registration sessions on their municipality's website as an alternative to in a newspaper (§ 1);
2. repeals obsolete provisions and references concerning municipal boards for admission of electors (§§ 2-5 & 14-15);
3. eliminates a requirement that registrars of voters meet on a specific day before a regular election to complete the registry list of all electors who may vote at the election, and instead requires them to complete the list before the election (§§ 6-7 & 9);
4. eliminates requirements that (a) the advisory committee tasked with establishing training programs for registrars of voters develop an election law and procedures training program and guide for registrars and their assistants and deputies and (b) registrars or their assistants or deputies annually receive at least 10 hours of training through that program (§§ 10-12 & 14); and
5. allows registrars of voters to appoint electors from any Connecticut municipality to serve as voting tabulator tenders, instead of only from their municipality as under current law (§ 13).

Lastly, the bill makes minor, technical, and conforming changes, including removing obsolete cross-references for the term "admitting

official” (§ 2) and clarifying language regarding voter registry lists (§ 8).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 1 — NOTICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION SESSION

The bill gives registrars of voters in each municipality the option to provide notice about the time and place of voter registration sessions on their municipal website. Under current law, they must notice these sessions in a newspaper published or circulated in the municipality. Instead, the bill allows either option. In either case, the notice must appear from five to 15 days before the session, and it need not be in the form of a legal advertisement.

§§ 2-5 & 14-15 — BOARDS FOR ADMISSION OF ELECTORS

The bill repeals obsolete references to municipal boards for admission of electors. Current law requires that these boards, among other things, adjudicate appeals made by someone who is denied admission as an elector (i.e., ability to vote) by a registrar of voters. However, in practice, municipalities no longer use these boards. Instead, someone aggrieved by a registrar’s admission decision may file a complaint with the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC).

§§ 6-7 & 9 — PRELIMINARY VOTER REGISTRY LIST

The bill eliminates the requirement that registrars of voters meet on the Tuesday of the fifth week before a regular election to complete a correct registry list of electors entitled to vote in the election (i.e., those on both the active and inactive voter registry lists). It instead requires them to complete the list before the election and makes conforming changes (e.g., repealing the requirement that the registrars notice the session at least five days in advance). In practice, registrars continually maintain this list through the statewide centralized voter registration system.

§§ 10-12 & 14 — REGISTRAR TRAINING

The bill eliminates a requirement that registrars of voters annually take, or designate their deputies or assistants to take, at least 10 instruction hours under an election law and procedures training

program developed by the six-member advisory committee that trains and certifies them. It similarly eliminates the requirement that the committee develop the program and a related guide and submit them to the secretary of the state for approval.

Under existing law unchanged by the bill, registrars of voters must (1) be certified through a program developed by the secretary in consultation with the advisory committee and (2) annually complete at least eight hours of training that are separate from the 10-hour training program the bill eliminates.

The advisory committee consists of representatives of the secretary of the state and SEEC, and four registrars of voters whom the secretary appoints in consultation with the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut (CGS § 9-192a).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/29/2022)