
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5309

AN ACT CONCERNING BALLOTS MADE AVAILABLE IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH.

SUMMARY

This bill requires that absentee ballots subject to translation requirements under federal or state law (see BACKGROUND) be submitted for municipal review. Specifically, it requires town clerks to give a draft of each ballot translation to the (1) members of the town's legislative body or (2) board of selectmen in a town where the legislative body is a town meeting. The members or board may provide comments to the clerk about the translations if this does not delay the clerk's printing of the ballots in time to issue them as the law requires.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

BACKGROUND

Voting Rights Act

The federal Voting Rights Act generally requires certain municipalities to provide language assistance during elections for certain language minority groups based on specified English proficiency population thresholds. In Connecticut, 10 municipalities are currently federally required to provide this assistance (in Spanish).

The state's voting rights act also requires municipalities to provide language-related assistance based on specified population metrics. According to the secretary of the state's website, under the law, an additional 23 municipalities are currently required to provide language-related assistance (in Spanish).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 16 Nay 3 (03/26/2024)