House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 651

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 7230

House of Representatives, April 10, 2025

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. BLUMENTHAL of the 147th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION STATUTES RELATED TO FILINGS WITH THE SUPERIOR COURT.

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

Section 1. Section 9-324 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(a) Any elector or candidate who claims that such elector or candidate is aggrieved by any ruling of any election official in connection with any election for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, State Treasurer, Attorney General, State Comptroller or judge of probate, held in such elector's or candidate's town, or that there has been a mistake in the count of the votes cast at such election for candidates for said offices or any of them, at any voting district in such elector's or candidate's town, or any candidate for such an office who claims that such candidate is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of section 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, section 9-364, 9-364a or 9-365 in the casting of absentee

ballots at such election or any candidate for the office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, State Treasurer, Attorney General or State Comptroller, who claims that such candidate is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of sections 9-700 to 9-716, inclusive, may bring such elector's or candidate's complaint **[**to any judge of the Superior Court, in which such**]** in the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport. Such elector or candidate shall set out in the complaint the claimed errors of such election official, the claimed errors in the count or the claimed violations of said sections. In any action brought pursuant to the provisions of this section, the complainant shall send a copy of the complaint by first-class mail, or deliver a copy of the complaint by hand, to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made prior to such election, **[**such judge**]** the court shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on the complaint and shall cause notice of the hearing to be given to the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made subsequent to the election, it shall be brought not later than fourteen days after the election or, if such complaint is brought in response to the manual tabulation of paper ballots authorized pursuant to section 9-320f, such complaint shall be brought not later than seven days after the close of any such manual tabulation. **[**and, in either such circumstance, such judge**]**

(b) The court shall forthwith order a hearing to be **[**had**]** held upon **[**such**]** a complaint filed under subsection (a) of this section, upon a day not more than five nor less than three days from the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three nor more than five days to be given to any candidate or candidates whose election may be affected by the decision upon such hearing, to such election official, the Secretary of the State, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to any other party or parties whom **[**such judge**]** the court deems proper parties thereto, of the time and place for the hearing upon such complaint. **[**Such judge**]** The court shall, on the day fixed for such hearing and without unnecessary delay, proceed to hear the parties. If sufficient reason is shown, **[**such judge**]** the court may order any voting

tabulators to be unlocked or any ballot boxes to be opened and a recount of the votes cast, including absentee ballots, to be made. [Such judge] The court shall thereupon, in case [such judge] the court finds any error in the rulings of the election official, any mistake in the count of the votes or any violation of [said sections] any provision of sections 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, section 9-364, 9-364a or 9-365 or sections 9-700 to 9-716, inclusive, certify the result of [such judge's] the court's finding or decision to the Secretary of the State before the fifteenth day of the next succeeding December. [Such judge] The court may order a new election or a change in the existing election schedule. [Such certificate of such judge of such judge's]

(c) The certificate of the court's finding or decision pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be final and conclusive upon all questions relating to errors in the rulings of such election officials, to the correctness of such count, and, for the purposes of this section only, such claimed violations, and shall operate to correct the returns of the moderators or presiding officers, so as to conform to such finding or decision, unless the same is appealed from as provided in section 9-325, as amended by this act.

Sec. 2. Section 9-325 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

If, upon any such hearing [by a judge of the Superior Court] in the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport, any question of law is raised which any party to the complaint claims should be reviewed by the Supreme Court, [such judge] the court, instead of filing the certificate of [his] the court's finding or decision with the Secretary of the State, shall transmit the same, including therein such questions of law, together with a proper finding of facts, to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who shall thereupon call a special session of [said court] the Supreme Court for the purpose of an immediate hearing upon the questions of law so certified. A copy of the finding and decision so certified by [the judge of

the Superior Court**]** such superior court, together with the decision of the Supreme Court, on the questions of law therein certified, shall be attested by the clerk of the Supreme Court, and by **[**him**]** such clerk transmitted to the Secretary of the State forthwith. The finding and decision of **[**the judge of the Superior Court**]** such superior court, together with the decision of the Supreme Court on the questions of law thus certified, shall be final and conclusive upon all questions relating to errors in the rulings of the election officials and to the correctness of such count and shall operate to correct the returns of the moderators or presiding officers so as to conform to such decision of **[**said court**]** the Supreme Court. Nothing in this section shall be considered as prohibiting an appeal to the Supreme Court from a final judgment of **[**the Superior Court**]** such superior court. The judges of the Supreme Court may establish rules of procedure for the speedy and inexpensive hearing of such appeals within fifteen days of such judgment of **[**a judge of the Superior Court**]** such superior court.

Sec. 3. Section 9-328 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(a) Any elector or candidate claiming to have been aggrieved by any ruling of any election official in connection with an election for any municipal office or a primary for justice of the peace, or any elector or candidate claiming that there has been a mistake in the count of votes cast for any such office at such election or primary, or any candidate in such an election or primary claiming that **[**he**]** such candidate is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of sections 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, section 9-364, 9-364a or 9-365 in the casting of absentee ballots at such election or primary, may bring a complaint **[**to any judge of the Superior Court**]** in the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport for relief therefrom. In any action brought pursuant to the provisions of this section, the complainant shall send a copy of the complaint by first-class mail, or deliver a copy of the complaint by hand, to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made prior to such

election or primary, [such judge] the court shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on the complaint and shall cause notice of the hearing to be given to the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made subsequent to such election or primary, it shall be brought not later than fourteen days after such election or primary, except that if such complaint is brought in response to the manual tabulation of paper ballots, authorized pursuant to section 9-320f, such complaint shall be brought not later than seven days after the close of any such manual tabulation, to any judge of [the Superior Court] such superior court, in which [he] such complainant shall set out the claimed errors of the election official, the claimed errors in the count or the claimed violations of [said sections. Such judge] any provision of sections 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, section 9-364, 9-364a or 9-365.

(b) The court shall forthwith order a hearing to be [had] held upon [such] a complaint filed under subsection (a) of this section, upon a day not more than five nor less than three days from the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three nor more than five days to be given to any candidate or candidates whose election or nomination may be affected by the decision upon such hearing, to such election official, the Secretary of the State, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to any other party or parties whom [such judge] the court deems proper parties thereto, of the time and place for the hearing upon such complaint. [Such judge] The court shall, on the day fixed for such hearing and without unnecessary delay, proceed to hear the parties. If sufficient reason is shown, [he] the court may order any voting tabulators to be unlocked or any ballot boxes to be opened and a recount of the votes cast, including absentee ballots, to be made. [Such judge] The court shall thereupon, if [he] the court finds any error in the rulings of the election official or any mistake in the count of the votes, certify the result of [his] the court's finding or decision to the Secretary of the State before the tenth day succeeding the conclusion of the hearing. [Such judge] The court may order a new election or primary or a change in the existing election schedule. [Such certificate of such judge of his]

(c) The certificate of the court's finding or decision under subsection (b) of this section shall be final and conclusive upon all questions relating to errors in the ruling of such election officials, to the correctness of such count, and, for the purposes of this section only, such claimed violations, and shall operate to correct the returns of the moderators or presiding officers, so as to conform to such finding or decision, except that this section shall not affect the right of appeal to the Supreme Court and **[**it**]** shall not prevent **[**such judge**]** the court from reserving such questions of law for the advice of the Supreme Court as provided in section 9-325, as amended by this act. **[**Such judge**]** The court may, if necessary, issue **[**his**]** a writ of mandamus, requiring the adverse party and those **[**under him**]** thereunder to deliver to the complainant the appurtenances of such office, and shall cause **[**his**]** the court's finding and **[**decree**]** decision to be entered on the records of the Superior Court in the proper judicial district.

Sec. 4. Section 9-329a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(a) Any (1) elector or candidate aggrieved by a ruling of an election official in connection with any primary held pursuant to (A) section 9-423, 9-425 or 9-464, or (B) a special act, (2) elector or candidate who alleges that there has been a mistake in the count of the votes cast at such primary, or (3) candidate in such a primary who alleges that **[**he**]** such candidate is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of sections 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, section 9-364, 9-364a or 9-365 in the casting of absentee ballots at such primary, may bring **[**his**]** a complaint **[**to any judge of the Superior Court**]** in the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport for appropriate action. In any action brought pursuant to the provisions of this section, the complainant shall file a certification attached to the complaint indicating that a copy of the complaint has been sent by first-class mail or delivered to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made prior to such primary, **[**such judge**]** the court shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on the complaint and shall

cause notice of the hearing to be given to the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made subsequent to such primary, **[**it**]** such complaint shall be brought **[**,**]** not later than fourteen days after such primary **[**,**]** or, if such complaint is brought in response to the manual tabulation of paper ballots **[**,**]** described in section 9-320f, such complaint shall be brought **[**,**]** not later than seven days after the close of any such manual tabulation, **[**to any judge of the Superior Court**]** in such superior court.

(b) **[**Such judge**]** The court shall forthwith order a hearing to be held upon **[**such**]** a complaint filed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, upon a day not more than five nor less than three days after the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three days to be given to any candidate or candidates in any way directly affected by the decision upon such hearing, to such election official, to the Secretary of the State, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to any other person or persons, whom **[**such judge**]** the court deems proper parties thereto, of the time and place of the hearing upon such complaint. **[**Such judge**]** The court shall, on the day fixed for such hearing, and without delay, proceed to hear the parties and determine the result. If, after hearing, sufficient reason is shown, **[**such judge**]** the court may order any voting tabulators to be unlocked or any ballot boxes to be opened and a recount of the votes cast, including absentee ballots, to be made. **[**Such judge**]** The court shall thereupon, if **[**he**]** the court finds any error in the ruling of the election official, any mistake in the count of the votes or any violation of **[**said sections**]** any provision of sections 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, section 9-364, 9-364a or 9-365, certify the result of **[**his**]** the court's finding or decision to the Secretary of the State before the tenth day following the conclusion of the hearing. **[**Such judge**]** The court may (1) determine the result of such primary; (2) order a change in the existing primary schedule; or (3) order a new primary if **[**he**]** the court finds that, but for the error in the ruling of the election official, any mistake in the count of the votes or any violation of **[**said sections**]** any provision of sections 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, section 9-364, 9-364a or 9-365, the result of such primary might have been different and **[**he**]** the court is unable to determine the result of such primary.

(c) [The certification by the judge of his] The certificate of the court's finding or decision under subsection (b) of this section shall be final and conclusive upon all questions relating to errors in the ruling of such election official, to the correctness of such count, and, for the purposes of this section only, such alleged violations, and shall operate to correct any returns or certificates filed by the election officials, unless the same is appealed from as provided in section 9-325, as amended by this act. In the event a new primary is held pursuant to such [Superior Court] order of such superior court, the result of such new primary shall be final and conclusive unless a complaint is brought pursuant to this section. The clerk of [the] such superior court shall forthwith transmit a copy of such findings and order to the Secretary of the State.

Sec. 5. Section 9-329b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(a) At any time prior to a primary held before April 1, [2024] 2026, and pursuant to sections 9-423, 9-425 and 9-464, or a special act, or prior to any election held before April 1, [2024] 2026, the [Superior Court] superior court for the judicial district of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport may issue an order removing a candidate from a ballot where it is shown that such candidate is improperly on the ballot.

(b) At any time prior to the commencement of the period of early voting at a primary held on or after April 1, [2024] 2026, and pursuant to sections 9-423, 9-425 and 9-464, or a special act, or prior to the commencement of the period of early voting at any election held on or after April 1, [2024] 2026, the [Superior Court] superior court for the judicial district of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport may issue an order removing a candidate from a ballot where it is shown that such candidate is improperly on the ballot.

Sec. 6. Subparagraph (B) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of section 9-368j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(B) (i) In determining whether divergent voting patterns occur in a municipality or whether a method of election in such municipality results in a dilutive effect on the vote of protected class members, the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such municipality is located**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport (I) shall consider elections held prior to the filing of an action pursuant to this section as more probative than elections conducted after such filing, (II) shall consider evidence concerning elections for any municipal office in such municipality as more probative than evidence concerning elections for other offices, but may still afford probative value to evidence concerning elections for such other offices, (III) shall consider statistical evidence as more probative than nonstatistical evidence, (IV) in the case of claims brought on behalf of two or more protected classes that are politically cohesive in such municipality, shall combine members of such protected classes to determine whether voting by such combined protected class members is divergent from other electors and shall not require evidence that voting by each such protected class's members is separately divergent from such other electors, and (V) shall not require evidence concerning the intent of electors, elected officials or such municipality to discriminate against protected class members.

(ii) Evidence concerning the causes of, or reasons for, the occurrence of divergent voting patterns shall not be deemed relevant to the determination of whether divergent voting patterns occur or whether a method of election results in a dilutive effect on the vote of protected class members.

Sec. 7. Subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of section 9-368j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(c) (1) In determining whether, based on the totality of the circumstances, an impairment of the right to vote for any protected class member in a municipality, or of the opportunity or ability of protected class members in a municipality to participate in the political process

and elect candidates of their choice or otherwise influence the outcome of elections, has occurred, the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such municipality is located**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport may consider factors that include, but are not limited to: (A) The history of discrimination in or affecting the municipality or state; (B) the extent to which protected class members have been elected to office in the municipality; (C) the use of any qualification for eligibility to be an elector or other prerequisite to voting, any statute, ordinance, regulation or other law regarding the administration of elections, or any standard, practice, procedure or policy, by the municipality that may enhance the dilutive effects of a method of election in such municipality; (D) the extent of any history of unequal access on the part of protected class members or candidates to election administration or campaign finance processes that determine which candidates will receive access to the ballot or financial or other support in a given election for an office of the municipality; (E) the extent to which protected class members in the municipality or state have historically made expenditures, as defined in section 9-601b, at lower rates than other individuals in such municipality or state; (F) the extent to which protected class members in the municipality or state vote at lower rates than other electors in the municipality or state, as applicable; (G) the extent to which protected class members in the municipality are disadvantaged, or otherwise bear the effects of public or private discrimination, in areas that may hinder their ability to participate effectively in the political process, such as education, employment, health, criminal justice, housing, transportation, land use or environmental protection; (H) the extent to which protected class members in the municipality are disadvantaged in other areas that may hinder their ability to participate effectively in the political process; (I) the use of overt or subtle racial appeals in political campaigns in the municipality or surrounding the adoption or maintenance of a challenged practice; (J) the extent to which candidates face hostility or barriers while campaigning due to their membership in a protected class; (K) a significant or recurring lack of responsiveness on the part of elected officials of the municipality to the particularized needs of a

community or communities of protected class members, except that compliance with a court order shall not be considered to be evidence of such responsiveness; and (L) whether the particular method of election, ordinance, regulation or other law regarding the administration of elections, standard, practice, procedure or policy was designed to advance, and does materially advance, a valid state interest.

Sec. 8. Subsection (d) of section 9-368j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(d) Any individual aggrieved by a violation of this section, any organization whose membership includes individuals aggrieved by such a violation or the Secretary of the State may file an action alleging a violation of this section in the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such violation has occurred**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport. Members of two or more protected classes that are politically cohesive in a municipality may jointly file such an action in such court.

Sec. 9. Subdivision (1) of subsection (e) of section 9-368j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(e) (1) Notwithstanding any provision of this title and any special act, charter or home rule ordinance, whenever the superior court for **[**a**]** the judicial district of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport finds a violation by a municipality **[**within such judicial district**]** of any provision of this section, such court shall order appropriate remedies that are tailored to address such violation in such municipality and to ensure protected class members have equitable opportunities to fully participate in the political process and that can be implemented in a manner that will not unduly disrupt the administration of an ongoing or imminent election. Such court shall take into account the ability of officials who administer elections in such municipality to implement any change to voting for an ongoing or imminent election in a manner

that is orderly and fiscally sound, and shall not order any remedy that contravenes the Constitution of Connecticut. Appropriate remedies may include, but need not be limited to: (A) A district-based method of election; (B) an alternative method of election; (C) new or revised districting or redistricting plans; (D) elimination of staggered elections so that all members of the legislative body are elected at the same time; (E) reasonably increasing the size of the legislative body; (F) additional voting days or hours; (G) additional polling places; (H) additional means of voting, such as voting by mail, or additional opportunities to return ballots; (I) holding of special elections; (J) expanded opportunities for admission of electors; (K) additional elector education; (L) the restoration or addition of individuals to registry lists; or (M) retaining jurisdiction for such period of time as the court may deem appropriate, during which period no qualification for eligibility to be an elector or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice or procedure with respect to voting, that is different from that which was in effect at the time an action under subsection (d) of this section was commenced shall be enforced unless the court finds that such qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice or procedure does not have the purpose, and will not have the effect, of impairing the right to vote on the basis of protected class membership or in contravention of the guarantees with respect to such right that are set forth in sections 9-368j to 9-368q, inclusive, as amended by this act, provided, in any action brought pursuant to chapter 149, any remedy ordered shall be consistent with the provisions of said chapter. Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (M) of this subdivision, any such finding by the court shall not be a bar to any subsequent action to enjoin enforcement of such qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice or procedure.

Sec. 10. Subparagraphs (E) and (F) of subdivision (2) of subsection (g) of section 9-368j of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(E) If, pursuant to the provisions of this subsection, a municipality enacts or implements a remedy or the Secretary of the State approves a

proposed remedy, a party who sent a notification letter described in subdivision (1) of this subsection regarding a potential violation that is related to such remedy may, not later than thirty days after such enactment, implementation or approval, submit a claim for reimbursement from such municipality for the costs associated with producing and sending such notification letter. Such party shall submit such claim in writing and substantiate such claim with financial documentation, including a detailed invoice for any demography services or analysis of voting patterns in such municipality. Upon receipt of any such claim, such municipality may request additional financial documentation if that which has been provided by such party is insufficient to substantiate such costs. Such municipality shall reimburse such party for reasonable costs claimed or for an amount to which such party and such municipality agree, except that the cumulative amount of any such reimbursements to all such parties other than the Secretary of the State shall not exceed fifty thousand dollars, adjusted in accordance with any change in the consumer price index for all urban consumers as published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. If any such party and such municipality fail to agree to a reimbursement amount, either such party or such municipality may file an action for a declaratory judgment with the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such municipality is located**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport for a clarification of rights.

(F) (i) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, a party described in subsection (d) of this section may seek preliminary relief for a regular election held in a municipality by filing an action pursuant to this section during the one hundred twenty days prior to such regular election. Not later than the filing of such action, such party shall send a notification letter described in subdivision (1) of this subsection to such municipality. In the event any such action is withdrawn or dismissed as being moot as a result of such municipality's enactment or implementation of a remedy, or the approval by the Secretary of the State of a proposed remedy, any such party may only submit a claim for reimbursement in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (E)

of this subdivision.

(ii) In the case of preliminary relief sought pursuant to subparagraph (F)(i) of this subdivision by a party described in subsection (d) of this section, the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such municipality is located**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport shall grant such relief if such court determines that (I) such party has shown a substantial likelihood of success on the merits, and (II) it is possible to implement an appropriate remedy that would resolve the violation alleged under this section prior to such election in a manner that will not unduly disrupt such election.

Sec. 11. Subsection (g) of section 9-368*l* of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(g) Any individual aggrieved by a violation of this section, any organization whose membership includes individuals aggrieved by such a violation or the Secretary of the State may file an action alleging a violation of this section in the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such violation has occurred**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport, except that no determination of the Secretary under this section to designate a municipality or a language for the provision of assistance shall constitute a violation of this section.

Sec. 12. Subsection (a) of section 9-368m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(a) In accordance with the provisions of this section, the enactment or implementation of a covered policy, as described in subsection (b) of this section, by a covered jurisdiction, as described in subsection (c) of this section, shall be subject to preclearance, as described in subsections (e) and (f) of this section, by the Secretary of the State or the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such covered jurisdiction is located**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport.

Sec. 13. Subdivision (1) of subsection (f) of section 9-368m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(f) (1) If a covered jurisdiction seeks preclearance from the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such covered jurisdiction is located**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport for the adoption or implementation of any covered policy, in lieu of seeking such preclearance from the Secretary of the State pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, such covered jurisdiction shall submit, in writing, such covered policy to such court and may obtain such preclearance in accordance with the provisions of this subsection, provided (A) such covered jurisdiction shall also contemporaneously transmit to the Secretary of the State a copy of such submission, and (B) failure to so provide such copy shall result in an automatic denial of such preclearance. Notwithstanding the transmission to the Secretary of a copy of any such submission, the court shall exercise exclusive jurisdiction over such submission. The covered jurisdiction shall bear the burden of proof in the court's determination as to preclearance.

Sec. 14. Subsection (g) of section 9-368m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(g) If any covered jurisdiction enacts or implements any covered policy without obtaining preclearance for such covered policy in accordance with the provisions of this section, the Secretary of the State or any party described in subsection (d) of section 9-368j, as amended by this act, may file an action in the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such covered jurisdiction is located**]** of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport to enjoin such enactment or implementation and seek sanctions against such covered jurisdiction for violations of this section.

Sec. 15. Subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of section 9-368n of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu

thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*):

(c) (1) Any individual aggrieved by a violation of this section or any organization whose membership includes individuals aggrieved by such a violation may file an action alleging a violation of this section in the superior court for the judicial district **[**in which such violation has occurred**]** <u>of Hartford or for the judicial district of Bridgeport</u>. Such an action may be filed irrespective of any action that may be filed by the State Elections Enforcement Commission, the Attorney General or the State's Attorney as a result of such a violation.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-324
Sec. 2	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-325
Sec. 3	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-328
Sec. 4	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-329a
Sec. 5	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to complaints brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-329b
Sec. 6	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368j(b)(2)(B)

Sec. 7	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368j(c)(1)
Sec. 8	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368j(d)
Sec. 9	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368j(e)(1)
Sec. 10	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368j(g)(2)(E) and (F)
Sec. 11	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368l(g)
Sec. 12	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368m(a)
Sec. 13	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368m(f)(1)
Sec. 14	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368m(g)
Sec. 15	*July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions brought on or after July 1, 2025*	9-368n(c)(1)

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: None

Explanation

The bill, which changes the jurisdiction for certain election-related complaints, orders, and determinations, is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the state or to municipalities. The volume of cases associated with this change is not anticipated to be great enough to result in a material change to court operations.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7230

AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION STATUTES RELATED TO FILINGS WITH THE SUPERIOR COURT.

SUMMARY

This bill requires certain election-related complaints, orders, and determinations to be brought in or made by the superior courts for the judicial districts of Hartford or Bridgeport, including actions under the state's voting right act (VRA, see BACKGROUND). Current law allows any superior court with jurisdiction to conduct these actions.

Under the bill, the following complaints, orders, and determinations are subject to this change in jurisdiction:

1. complaints regarding elections for statewide offices and probate judges (§§ 1 & 2);

2. complaints regarding elections for municipal officers or primaries for justices of the peace (§ 3);

3. complaints regarding the presidential preference primary, primaries for state, district, or municipal office, town committee primaries, or a primary pursuant to a special act (§ 4);

4. orders for removing a candidate's name that is improperly on a ballot in a primary (§ 5);

5. actions brought under the state VRA, including complaints and determinations regarding voting discrimination (§§ 6-8 & 10); ordering remedies under the state VRA (§ 9); language assistance violations (§ 11); violations of preclearance requirements (see below; § 14); and claims of intimidation, deception, or obstructing the right to vote (§ 15).

Current law also requires certain jurisdictions to get preclearance from the secretary or the superior court where the municipality is located before enacting or implementing certain election policies or requirements. The bill instead requires these jurisdictions to receive preclearance from either the secretary or the Hartford or Bridgeport superior courts (§§ 12 & 13).

It also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, and applicable to actions filed on or after this date.

BACKGROUND

State Voting Rights Act

In 2023, the state adopted legislation that generally codified several aspects of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 into state law. Broadly, the state's law prohibits municipalities from (1) employing election methods in municipal elections that dilute the vote of protected class members or (2) imposing certain practices or policies in a way that impairs protected class members' right to vote. It also authorizes the secretary of the state and certain aggrieved parties to file a civil action after following certain procedures.

Additionally, it generally prohibits engaging in intimidating, deceptive, or obstructive acts that affect the right to vote, requires certain municipalities to provide language-related assistance in voting and elections, and generally allows the secretary and certain aggrieved parties to file court actions alleging violations.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 13 Nay 6 (03/26/2025)