



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

Raised Bill No. 1515

LCO No. 6406



Referred to Committee on GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION
AND ELECTIONS

Introduced by:
(GAE)

AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION OVERSIGHT.

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a
2 Municipal Election Accountability Board, which shall be within the
3 office of the Secretary of the State for administrative purposes only, for
4 the purposes of reviewing the administration of elections, primaries and
5 referenda, including the conduct of early voting, absentee voting and
6 same-day election registration, and the duties of election officials under
7 title 9 of the general statutes, in municipalities in this state whenever
8 such municipalities are referred to the board for such review, overseeing
9 the administration of elections in such municipalities where necessary
10 and establishing procedural safeguards for the effective conduct of such
11 elections, primaries and referenda in such municipalities. Nothing in
12 this section shall be construed to (1) affect the powers and duties under
13 title 9 of the general statutes of the Secretary of the State or the State
14 Elections Enforcement Commission, including chapter 151a of the
15 general statutes, (2) preclude any person from seeking additional
16 remedies under title 9 of the general statutes, including under chapter

17 151a of the general statutes, or (3) otherwise affect chapter 151a of the
18 general statutes.

19 (b) (1) The Municipal Election Accountability Board shall be
20 comprised of: (A) The Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee,
21 who shall be the chairperson of the board; (B) the executive director of
22 the State Elections Enforcement Commission, or the executive director's
23 designee; (C) nine members appointed by the Secretary of the State, with
24 the advice and consent of the General Assembly, as follows: (i) One
25 member who shall be admitted to the practice of law in this state and
26 has expertise in election law; (ii) two members who shall be moderators
27 that are certified under section 9-229 of the general statutes and enrolled
28 in different political parties and who shall be selected from lists of five
29 recommendations from each major party, as defined in section 9-372 of
30 the general statutes, provided by the Registrars of Voters Association of
31 Connecticut; (iii) two members who shall be registrars of voters and
32 enrolled in different political parties and who shall be selected from lists
33 of five recommendations from each major party provided by the
34 Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut; (iv) two members who
35 shall be town clerks and enrolled in different political parties and who
36 shall be selected from lists of five recommendations from each major
37 party provided by the Connecticut Town Clerks Association; and (v)
38 two members who shall be chief elected officials of municipalities and
39 enrolled in different political parties and who shall be selected from lists
40 of five recommendations from each major party provided by, jointly, the
41 Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Connecticut Council
42 of Small Towns; and (D) one member appointed by each of the four
43 legislative leaders, as defined in section 4-9d of the general statutes, who
44 shall have expertise in election administration or election law, provided
45 appointments under subparagraphs (C) and (D) of this subdivision shall
46 be made so that no single municipality is represented by more than one
47 member.

48 (2) Members described in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of subdivision
49 (1) of this subsection shall serve for a term of four years and until a

50 successor is appointed, and initial appointments of such members shall
51 be made not later than August 1, 2025. Members described in said
52 subparagraphs shall recuse themselves from participating in any
53 proceeding of the board on any matter in which a conflict exists due to
54 such member or the immediate family of such member being involved
55 in any matter before said board, including, but not limited to, a matter
56 concerning a town appearing before said board that a member
57 represents on said board. The filling of any vacancy shall be for the
58 remainder of the applicable member's term. The members of the board
59 shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for expenses
60 incurred in the performance of their duties. For the purposes of this
61 subdivision, "immediate family" means a dependent relative who
62 resides in the member's household or any spouse, child, parent or
63 sibling of the member.

64 (c) (1) Beginning on the second Tuesday of January in 2026, and every
65 month thereafter on such second Tuesday, the Municipal Election
66 Accountability Board shall hold a regularly scheduled meeting.

67 (2) All regularly scheduled meetings shall be noticed on the Internet
68 web site of the office of the Secretary of the State. In the event of any
69 review hearing or preliminary review to be held under section 2 of this
70 act, information regarding such hearing or review shall be added to
71 such notice not later than forty-eight hours prior to any such meeting.

72 (3) A vacancy on the board shall not impair the right of the remaining
73 members exercise all powers of the board, and a majority of the total
74 membership of the board shall constitute a quorum.

75 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2026*) (a) (1) Whenever the Secretary
76 of the State or the State Elections Enforcement Commission is of the
77 opinion that a reasonable likelihood of irregularity or impropriety in the
78 administration of any election, primary or referendum in a municipality
79 exists, based on any formal or informal complaint received by the
80 Secretary or the commission from an individual, the Secretary or the

81 commission, as applicable, may refer such municipality to the
82 Municipal Election Accountability Board for a review hearing on such
83 municipality's procedures related to the conduct of any such election,
84 primary or referendum. Any such referral shall be accompanied by
85 supporting evidence, including, but not limited to, affidavits, written or
86 electronic correspondence and documented findings from an
87 investigation.

88 (2) Whenever a judge of the Superior Court is of the opinion that a
89 reasonable likelihood of irregularity or impropriety in the
90 administration of any election, primary or referendum in a municipality
91 exists, based on a matter before such court involving such municipality's
92 alleged violation of any provision of title 9 of the general statutes, such
93 judge may refer such municipality to the Municipal Election
94 Accountability Board for a review hearing on such municipality's
95 procedures related to the conduct of any such election, primary or
96 referendum. Any such referral shall be accompanied by supporting
97 evidence, including, but not limited to, any record developed during a
98 judicial proceeding.

99 (3) (A) Whenever a municipal clerk, registrar of voters or moderator
100 observes any act or omission that may present an impediment to the
101 timely and orderly administration of any duty required of a
102 municipality under title 9 of the general statutes, or (B) whenever the
103 chief executive officer of a municipality, based on a review of such
104 municipality's practices, identifies any such practice that may present
105 such an impediment, such municipal clerk, registrar of voters,
106 moderator or chief executive officer, as applicable, may refer such
107 municipality to the Municipal Election Accountability Board for a
108 review hearing on such municipality's procedures related to the conduct
109 of elections, primaries and referenda. Any such referral shall be
110 accompanied by supporting evidence, including, but not limited to,
111 affidavits, written or electronic correspondence, procedure manuals and
112 other guidance documents and logs of absentee ballot applications,
113 moderator's diaries or other contemporaneously-produced notes or

114 records.

115 (4) Whenever any citizen of the state has a good-faith belief that a
116 reasonable likelihood of irregularity or impropriety in the
117 administration of any election, primary or referendum in a municipality
118 exists, such citizen may file a report detailing such irregularity or
119 impropriety with the Municipal Election Accountability Board seeking
120 a preliminary review of such municipality's procedures related to the
121 conduct of any such election, primary or referendum. Any such report
122 shall be accompanied by supporting evidence, including, but not
123 limited to, affidavits, written or electronic correspondence and
124 documented findings from an investigation. All submissions of such
125 supporting evidence shall be made under penalty of false statement.

126 (b) At the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Municipal Election
127 Accountability Board after the receipt of a citizen report under
128 subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of this section, the board shall hold a
129 preliminary review for the purpose of determining whether to hold a
130 review hearing under subsection (c) of this section. At such preliminary
131 review, the board shall vote to determine whether, if everything in the
132 citizen report is accurate, the report municipality would be likely to be
133 designated for oversight in accordance with subsection (c) of this
134 section. In making such determination, the board shall consider (1) the
135 plausibility of the citizen report based on such report and supporting
136 evidence, (2) the nature and severity of the alleged irregularity or
137 impropriety, including whether any such irregularity or impropriety
138 would constitute a violation of the provisions of chapter 151 or 151a of
139 the general statutes, and (3) the frequency with which any such
140 irregularity or impropriety is alleged to have occurred in such reported
141 municipality. A preliminary review of a citizen report held under this
142 subsection shall not be considered a contested case under chapter 54 of
143 the general statutes.

144 (c) Immediately upon receipt of a referral under subsection (a) of this
145 section or an affirmative vote at a preliminary review of a citizen report

146 held under subsection (b) of this section, the Municipal Election
147 Accountability Board shall give notice of such referral or citizen report
148 to the referred municipality. Not later than ten days after receipt of such
149 notice, the referred municipality may submit to the board a written
150 response to such referral or citizen report. Not later than forty-five days
151 after receipt of such response, or not later than sixty days after the board
152 gave notice of such referral of citizen report to the referred municipality
153 if such municipality does not submit such a written response, during a
154 regularly scheduled meeting of the board, the board shall hold a review
155 hearing for the purpose of presenting to such referred or reported
156 municipality the evidence that accompanied such referral or citizen
157 report. At such review hearing, the chief executive officer, the
158 corporation counsel or any other duly authorized representative of such
159 referred or reported municipality shall have a right to respond to the
160 evidence that accompanied such referral or citizen report, including, but
161 not limited to, rebuttal of any fact alleged and confrontation of any
162 witness. Not later than the next regularly scheduled meeting after the
163 review hearing, the board shall vote to determine (1) whether to
164 designate such referred or reported municipality for oversight by the
165 board in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of this act, (2) if
166 such oversight is deemed necessary, the tier to which such municipality
167 shall be designated, and (3) if such oversight is deemed necessary, the
168 length of time such municipality shall be subject to such oversight. In
169 making the determination under subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of this
170 subsection, the board shall consider: (A) The referred or reported
171 municipality's response, if any, to such evidence, (B) the nature and
172 severity of the alleged irregularity or impropriety, including whether
173 any such irregularity or impropriety constitutes a violation of the
174 provisions of chapter 151 or 151a of the general statutes, and (C) the
175 frequency with which any such irregularity or impropriety appears to
176 occur in such referred or reported municipality. The determination of
177 the board under this subsection may be appealed in accordance with the
178 provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes. Any such appeal shall
179 be privileged with respect to assignment.

180 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2026*) A referred municipality
181 designated as a:

182 (1) Tier I municipality shall be subject to oversight by the Municipal
183 Election Accountability Board consisting of (A) development by such
184 municipality of a plan to mitigate the concerns that warranted such
185 designation by the board, which shall be submitted to the board for
186 approval and modification as required by the board, (B) mandatory
187 training of election officials in election administration procedures and
188 best practices conducted by the office of the Secretary of the State or by
189 a certified moderator, town clerk or registrar of voters, or a combination
190 thereof, selected by the Secretary of the State, and (C) distribution of
191 instruction or training manuals or other resources for promoting best
192 practices in election administration.

193 (2) Tier II municipality shall be subject to oversight by the board
194 consisting of (A) the measures provided under subdivision (1) of this
195 section for a Tier I municipality, and (B) regular contact with the
196 municipality to ensure (i) compliance with such mitigation plan and
197 timely achievement of the benchmarks set forth in such mitigation plan,
198 (ii) attendance of such election officials at such mandatory training, and
199 (iii) distribution of such manuals or resources.

200 (3) Tier III municipality shall be subject to oversight by the board
201 consisting of (A) the measures provided under subdivision (2) of this
202 section for a Tier II municipality, and (B) appointment of an election
203 monitor (i) who shall be authorized to (I) conduct inspections, inquiries
204 and investigations related to any duty or responsibility under title 9 of
205 the general statutes to be carried out by any official of such municipality
206 or appointee of such official, (II) have access to all records, data and
207 material maintained by or available to any such official or appointee,
208 and (III) immediately report to the Secretary of the State any irregularity
209 or impropriety in the performance of any duty or responsibility
210 described in subparagraph (B)(i)(I) of this subdivision, and (ii) who shall
211 be provided, by such municipality, with any office space, supplies,

212 equipment and services necessary to properly carry out such election
213 monitor's duties and responsibilities.

214 (4) Tier IV municipality shall be subject to oversight by the board
215 consisting of the complete administration by the board of any election,
216 primary or referendum in such municipality, and all procedures related
217 to the orderly conduct of any such election, primary or referendum,
218 notwithstanding the provisions of (A) titles 7 and 9 of the general
219 statutes, (B) any special act, and (C) any charter or home rule ordinance
220 adopted pursuant to chapter 99 of the general statutes.

221 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1, 2026,
222 the Municipal Election Accountability Board shall adopt regulations, in
223 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, as
224 the board deems necessary to implement the provisions of sections 1 to
225 3, inclusive, of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>January 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>January 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To establish a Municipal Election Accountability Board and a process by which said board may be authorized to exercise oversight of municipalities in the administration of their elections, primaries and referenda.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]