
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1163

AN ACT CONCERNING QUALIFICATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS APPOINTED TO SERVE AS MODERATORS AT ELECTIONS AND PRIMARIES.

SUMMARY

This bill prohibits registrars of voters from designating or appointing a person as a moderator if the person has been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, any offense under the state's election laws, or felonies involving fraud, forgery, larceny, embezzlement, or bribery. Under existing law, moderators are generally required to be certified by the secretary of the state before serving at an election or primary (see BACKGROUND), and in order to receive their certification, they are subject to the same disqualifiers the bill imposes.

A moderator is the chief public official at each polling place responsible for impartially presiding over the polling place in accordance with the state's election laws. If a moderator is unable to serve, a certified alternate moderator must serve as moderator. Registrars of voters are responsible for designating a moderator for each polling place, including early voting and central counting locations.

By law, if a town or voting district lacks a moderator, the registrars of voters must appoint a new moderator. The new moderator must become certified if possible. If all instructional and certification sessions have already been conducted at the time of the moderator's appointment, he or she must receive instruction from the registrars.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Moderator Certification Requirements

State law requires the secretary to provide instructional and certification sessions for moderator training each year, subject to certain

geographical and frequency requirements. At a minimum, the curriculum must include (1) procedures for counting and recording absentee ballots, (2) hands-on training for using voting tabulators, and (3) the moderator's duties in conducting a primary or election.

The secretary must generally certify anyone who successfully completes an instructional session or regional instructional session (i.e. a session conducted by a regional election advisor) and passes an exam she administers. A person cannot be certified if he or she has been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, any felony involving fraud, forgery, larceny, embezzlement, or bribery, or any criminal offense under the state's election laws.

The secretary's certification is valid for four years. Before it expires, a certified moderator may undergo an abridged recertification process the secretary administers. Once completed, the certification must be renewed for another four years.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/19/2025)