



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 652

January Session, 2025

House Bill No. 7241

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 bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING ABSENTEE VOTING FOR ALL.

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

1 Section 1. Section 9-135 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 [(a)] Any elector eligible to vote at a primary or an election, and any
4 person eligible to vote at a referendum, who will not appear at such
5 elector's or person's polling place on the day of such primary, election
6 or referendum may vote by absentee ballot. [if such elector or person is
7 unable to appear at such elector's or person's polling place on the day of
8 such primary, election or referendum for any of the following reasons:
9 (1) Such elector's or person's active service with the armed forces of the
10 United States; (2) such elector's or person's absence from the town of
11 such elector's or person's voting residence; (3) sickness; (4) physical
12 disability; (5) the tenets of such elector's or person's religion forbid
13 secular activity on the day of such primary, election or referendum; or
14 (6) the required performance of such elector's or person's duties as a

15 primary, election or referendum official, including as a town clerk or
16 registrar of voters or as staff of the clerk or registrar, at a polling place
17 other than such elector's or person's own during all of the hours of
18 voting at such primary, election or referendum.]

19 [(b) No person shall misrepresent the eligibility requirements for
20 voting by absentee ballot prescribed in subsection (a) of this section, to
21 any elector or prospective absentee ballot applicant.]

22 Sec. 2. Section 9-137 of the general statutes is repealed and the
23 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

24 Each absentee ballot shall be returned to the municipal clerk, inserted
25 in an inner envelope which shall be capable of being sealed and which
26 shall have printed on its face a form containing the following statements:

27 "I hereby state under the penalties of false statement in absentee
28 balloting that I am eligible to vote at the primary, election or referendum
29 in the municipality in which this absentee ballot is to be cast and that I
30 [expect to be unable to] will not appear at my polling place on the day
31 of such primary, election or referendum. [for one or more of the
32 following reasons: (1) My active service in the armed forces; (2) my
33 absence from the town in which I am eligible to vote; (3) sickness; (4)
34 physical disability; (5) the tenets of my religion which forbid secular
35 activity on the day of such primary, election or referendum; or (6) my
36 duties as a primary, election or referendum official.]

37 Date

38 (Signature)"

39 Sec. 3. Subsections (k) to (o), inclusive, of section 9-140 of the general
40 statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
41 (*Effective from passage*):

42 (k) (1) A person shall register with the town clerk before distributing
43 five or more absentee ballot applications for an election, primary or
44 referendum, not including applications distributed to such person's

45 immediate family. Such requirement shall not apply to a person who is
46 the designee of an applicant.

47 (2) Any person who distributes absentee ballot applications shall
48 maintain a list of the names and addresses of prospective absentee ballot
49 applicants who receive such applications, and shall file such list with
50 the town clerk prior to the date of the primary, election or referendum
51 for which the applications were so distributed. Any person who
52 distributes absentee ballot applications and receives an executed
53 application shall forthwith file the application with the town clerk.

54 [(l) No candidate, party or political committee, or agent of such
55 candidate or committee shall mail unsolicited applications for absentee
56 ballots to any person, unless such mailing includes: (1) A written
57 explanation of the eligibility requirements for voting by absentee ballot
58 as prescribed in subsection (a) of section 9-135, and (2) a written warning
59 that voting or attempting to vote by absentee ballot without meeting one
60 or more of such eligibility requirements subjects the elector or applicant
61 to potential civil and criminal penalties. As used in this subsection,
62 "agent" means any person authorized to act on behalf of another
63 person.]

64 [(m)] (l) The Secretary of the State shall conspicuously post on the
65 Secretary of the State's web site, adjacent to the absentee ballot
66 application form available for downloading, a notice that the
67 application may be downloaded by a person only for (1) the person's
68 own use, (2) the use of a member of the person's immediate family, or
69 (3) the use of a designee of the applicant. The notice shall also contain
70 an advisory statement concerning the requirements of subsection (k) of
71 this section.

72 [(n)] (m) The State Elections Enforcement Commission, in
73 consultation with the Secretary of the State, shall prepare a summary of
74 the requirements and prohibitions of the absentee voting laws, which
75 shall be posted on said agencies' web sites. Candidates and political
76 party chairpersons shall provide such summary to campaign and party
77 employees and volunteers.

78 [(o)] (n) As used in this section, (1) "immediate family" has the same
79 meaning as provided in subsection (a) of section 9-140b, and (2)
80 "designee" has the same meaning as provided in subsection (b) of
81 section 9-140b.

82 Sec. 4. Section 9-153a of the general statutes is repealed and the
83 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

84 The form of absentee ballot application provided by any federal
85 department or agency, referred to in section 9-140, as amended by this
86 act, may be used only by a person in any one of the following categories
87 who is eligible to vote and who [expects to be unable to] will not appear
88 at [his] such person's proper polling place; [for any reason specified in
89 section 9-135:] (1) Members of the armed forces, (2) the spouses and
90 dependents of such members, (3) members of religious groups or
91 welfare agencies assisting members of the armed forces, who are
92 officially attached to and serving with the armed forces, and their
93 spouses and dependents, (4) civilian employees of the United States in
94 all categories serving outside the territorial limits of the several states of
95 the United States and the District of Columbia and their spouses and
96 dependents when residing with or accompanying them, whether or not
97 the employee is subject to the civil service laws and the Federal
98 Classification Act of 1949, and whether or not paid from funds
99 appropriated by the Congress, (5) citizens of the United States
100 temporarily residing outside of the territorial limits of the several states
101 of the United States and the District of Columbia, and (6) overseas
102 citizens qualified to vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens
103 Absentee Voting Act, 100 Stat. 924, 42 USC 1973ff et seq., as amended
104 from time to time. Any such person may apply for an absentee ballot in
105 the manner provided in said section 9-140, either on the form prescribed
106 by the Secretary of the State under said section, or on the application
107 form provided by any federal department or agency hereinbefore
108 referred to.

109 Sec. 5. Section 9-369a of the general statutes is repealed and the
110 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

111 Whenever by law it is provided that a question may be submitted to
112 a vote of the electors of a municipality at an election, as that term is
113 defined in section 9-1:

114 (a) The electors of the municipality [entitled to vote] voting by
115 absentee ballot at the election under the provisions of section 9-135, as
116 amended by this act, [shall be entitled to] may vote upon any such
117 question.

118 (b) When the clerk of the municipality determines that the necessary
119 action has been taken for submission of the question, he shall, at least
120 forty-five days prior to the election, file in the office of the Secretary of
121 the State a statement setting forth the designation of the question as it is
122 to appear on the ballot at the election, the date upon which the
123 submitting action was taken and the reference to the law under which
124 the action was taken. Such designation shall be in the form of a question,
125 as provided in section 9-369. Whenever it is specifically provided in the
126 general statutes that any such question may be approved for such
127 submission within the period of forty-five days prior to such an election,
128 and action is taken to submit a question within such period, the clerk of
129 the municipality shall file the statement required by this subsection with
130 the Secretary of the State immediately upon the taking of such action.

131 (c) When action is taken for submission of a question, from the time
132 of such action through the day of the election, the clerk of the
133 municipality shall make the full text of the question and the designation
134 which is to appear upon the ballot available for public inspection. If the
135 designation is not prescribed by law, the clerk shall phrase the
136 designation of the question in a form suitable for printing on the ballot.
137 The warning of the election shall include a statement that the question
138 is to be voted upon, the designation of the question to appear on the
139 ballot, and a statement that the full text of the question is available for
140 public inspection in the clerk's office.

141 (d) The moderator or head moderator of the election shall file the
142 results of the vote on each such question and the returns of the election
143 with the Secretary of the State in the manner prescribed under the

144 provisions of section 9-314 or other applicable law.

145 Sec. 6. Subsection (b) of section 9-369c of the general statutes is
 146 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
 147 *passage*):

148 (b) At any such referendum, any person who [would be] is eligible to
 149 vote on the question or proposal [if he appeared in person and is unable
 150 to] and who will not appear in person [for one or more of the reasons
 151 set forth in section 9-135,] may cast [his] such person's vote by absentee
 152 ballot, in accordance with the requirements of this section.

153 Sec. 7. Subparagraph (B) of subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of section
 154 9-163aa of the general statutes is repealed and the following is
 155 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

156 (B) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent an individual
 157 who enrolls in a political party during a period of early voting at a
 158 primary from voting by absentee ballot [, if eligible,] or in person on the
 159 day of such primary.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	9-135
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	9-137
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	9-140(k) to (o)
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	9-153a
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	9-369a
Sec. 6	<i>from passage</i>	9-369c(b)
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>	9-163aa(a)(4)(B)

GAE *Joint Favorable*

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:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	Up to 25,000	Up to 25,000

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Various Municipalities	STATE MANDATE ¹ - Cost	Up to 850,000	Up to 1,050,000

Explanation

This bill authorizes all eligible voters to apply for and cast an absentee ballot resulting in the costs described below.

The bill results in a cost to the Secretary of the State (SOTS) of up to 25,000² in FY 26 and FY 27³. This cost is associated with the printing costs for an expected increase in the number of absentee ballot applications and ballot information. The exact cost will depend on the number of additional electors who choose to vote absentee as a result of the

¹ State mandate is defined in Sec. 2-32b(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "state mandate" means any state initiated constitutional, statutory or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues.

² FY 26 estimate includes expected costs for a municipal general election, and a municipal primary.

³ FY 27 estimate includes a state election, and state election primary.

legislation⁴.

The bill additionally, results in a cost to municipalities of up to \$850,000 in FY 26⁵ and up to \$1,050,000 in FY 27⁶ due to printing, postage, labor, and storage costs to process the expected increase in absentee voting. The exact cost will vary by town depending on the number of additional absentee ballots printed, applications mailed, and labor and resources required to facilitate additional absentee voting.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation, voter preference of voting method, and participation.

⁴ The expected ceiling assumes a 10% increase in each town's absentee voting participation over 2024 figures. This figure could be higher depending on actual voter participation via absentee voting. A 10% increase by town would represent an estimated increase of 273,812 absentee voters for a general election.

⁵ FY 26 estimate includes expected costs for a municipal general election, and a municipal primary.

⁶ FY 27 estimate includes a state election, and state election primary.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 7241*****AN ACT CONCERNING ABSENTEE VOTING FOR ALL.*****SUMMARY**

This bill authorizes eligible voters who will not appear at their designated polling place on the day of an election, primary, or referendum to apply for and cast an absentee ballot.

Under current law, in order to apply for and cast an absentee ballot, a voter must be unable to appear at his or her designated polling place on election day due to (1) active service in the U.S. armed forces; (2) absence from their city or town; (3) sickness or physical disability; (4) their religious beliefs prohibiting secular activity on that day; or (5) service as a primary, election, or referendum official at a polling place other than his or her own during all voting hours. The bill eliminates these requirements.

The bill also eliminates prohibitions on (1) misrepresenting the absentee balloting eligibility requirements to any elector or prospective applicant and (2) campaign committees and their agents from mailing unsolicited applications without certain disclaimers.

The bill also makes several other conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/26/2025)