



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

***Raised Bill No. 7150***

LCO No. 5660



Referred to Committee on PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduced by:  
(PD)

***AN ACT CONCERNING JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.***

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

1       Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2026*) (a) For the purposes of this  
2       section and sections 2 to 4, inclusive, of this act:

3       (1) "Justice of the peace" means any person that holds the office of  
4       justice of the peace pursuant to section 9-183b, 9-183c, 9-184 or 9-184c of  
5       the general statutes, as amended by this act;

6       (2) "Official misconduct" means, in the performance of the duties of a  
7       justice of the peace, (A) a justice of the peace's performance of an act  
8       prohibited by the general statutes or failure to perform an act mandated  
9       by the general statutes, or (B) a justice of the peace's performance of an  
10      act in a manner found to be negligent, fraudulent, unlawful or against  
11      the public interest; and

12      (3) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the State.

13      (b) To be qualified to hold the office of justice of the peace, a person  
14      shall:

15 (1) Be appointed pursuant to section 9-183b, 9-183c, 9-184 or 9-184c of  
16 the general statutes, as amended by this act; and

17 (2) Pass a written examination developed and administered by the  
18 Secretary (A) not later than one hundred twenty days after an  
19 appointment made after January 1, 2026, or (B) not later than May 1,  
20 2026, if such appointment is made on or before January 1, 2026.

21 (c) The Secretary shall (1) develop and publish on the Internet web  
22 site of the Secretary of the State a manual concerning the duties of a  
23 justice of the peace, and (2) develop and administer a written  
24 examination for persons seeking to hold the office of justice of the peace.

25 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2026*) (a) No justice of the peace shall  
26 (1) perform any official action with intent to deceive or defraud any  
27 person, (2) use the title of justice of the peace in an endorsement or  
28 promotional statement for any product, third-party service, contest or  
29 other offering, or (3) perform a marriage that the justice of the peace  
30 knows or should have known is fraudulent in violation of 8 USC 1325,  
31 as amended from time to time.

32 (b) A justice of the peace shall be liable to any person for any damages  
33 proximately caused to that person as a result of the justice of the peace's  
34 official misconduct.

35 (c) An employer of a justice of the peace shall be liable to any person  
36 for any damages proximately caused to that person as a result of the  
37 justice of the peace's official misconduct if such misconduct is related to  
38 the employer's business or if the employer directed, encouraged,  
39 consented to, ratified or approved the justice of the peace's official  
40 misconduct, either (1) in the particular transaction that constitutes  
41 official misconduct, or (2) implicitly by previous actions in at least one  
42 similar transaction that constitutes official misconduct.

43 (d) An employer of a justice of the peace shall be liable to the justice  
44 of the peace for any damages (1) recovered from the justice of the peace

45 as a result of official misconduct that was coerced by threat of such  
46 employer, if the threat, including, but not limited to, a threat of  
47 demotion or dismissal, was made in reference to a particular act or  
48 implicitly by the employer's previous actions in at least one similar  
49 transaction, and (2) caused to the justice of the peace by a demotion,  
50 dismissal or other action by such employer resulting from the justice of  
51 the peace's refusal to commit official misconduct.

52 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2026*) (a) The Secretary shall  
53 investigate any allegations of official misconduct by a justice of the  
54 peace and shall issue a finding at the conclusion of any such  
55 investigation.

56 (b) When the Secretary determines that a justice of the peace has  
57 engaged in official misconduct or otherwise violated any provision of  
58 the general statutes in the performance of the duties of a justice of the  
59 peace, the Secretary may (1) deliver a written warning or reprimand to  
60 such justice of the peace, or (2) notwithstanding the provisions of any  
61 special act, municipal charter or ordinance to the contrary, suspend or  
62 revoke a justice of the peace's appointment.

63 (c) The termination, whether voluntary or involuntary, revocation or  
64 lapse of an appointment as a justice of the peace shall not interrupt or  
65 preclude an investigation into any allegation of official misconduct  
66 against a justice of the peace under this section.

67 (d) The Secretary may adopt regulations, in accordance with the  
68 provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, to carry out the purposes  
69 of sections 1 to 3, inclusive, of this act.

70 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding the  
71 provisions of section 9-183b, 9-183c or 9-184c of the general statutes, as  
72 amended by this act, any vacancy in the office of a justice of the peace,  
73 if such vacancy is created by the adoption of an ordinance or charter  
74 amendment by a municipality that (1) increases the number of justices  
75 of the peace in such municipality, and (2) is effective not less than

76 ninety-one days prior to the next quadrennial appointment of justices of  
77 the peace in the municipality, may be filled by appointment prior to the  
78 next quadrennial appointment by the town committee of any major  
79 party using the procedures prescribed by section 9-183b or 9-183c of the  
80 general statutes, or by the town clerk of such municipality using the  
81 procedure prescribed by section 9-184c of the general statutes, as  
82 amended by this act, as applicable to such vacancy.

83 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-183b, 9-183c or 9-184c  
84 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, any person appointed to  
85 fill a vacancy in an office of the justice of the peace pursuant to  
86 subsection (a) of this section shall serve until the next quadrennial  
87 appointment of justices of the peace in the municipality.

88 (c) If a vacancy in an office of the justice of the peace has been filled  
89 by appointment by a town committee, the chairperson or secretary of  
90 such town committee shall file with the town clerk a certificate of each  
91 such appointment, and the town clerk shall record the certificate with  
92 the records of the town meeting. The town clerk shall notify the  
93 secretary of any such appointment.

94 Sec. 5. Section 9-184c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
95 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

96 (a) In 1994, 1996, and quadrennially thereafter, the town clerk of each  
97 town shall appoint as justice of the peace a number of electors of the  
98 town who are not members of major parties, as defined in section 9-372,  
99 which shall not exceed (1) where no justices of the peace are selected  
100 under section 9-183c, one-third of the total number of justices of the  
101 peace in the town, or (2) where justices of the peace are selected under  
102 section 9-183c, one-third of the total number of justices of the peace in  
103 the town less the number of justices of the peace in the town selected  
104 under section 9-183c. Such percentage shall be rounded up to the nearest  
105 whole number of justices of the peace. Any such appointment shall be  
106 made upon written application submitted on or after August first and

107 on or before November first, in such year. No person who has  
108 enrollment privileges in the town in a political party which selected  
109 justices of the peace under section 9-183b or under section 9-183c within  
110 the period beginning three months before said August first and ending  
111 on the date the person is to be appointed under this section, shall be  
112 eligible for such appointment. Not later than August 1, 1996, and  
113 quadrennially thereafter, the town clerk shall send a written notice to  
114 each incumbent justice of the peace appointed under this section. Such  
115 notice shall inform such justices of the peace of the procedures set forth  
116 in this section concerning the reappointment of such justices of the  
117 peace.

118 (b) If, on November first in such year, the number of applications for  
119 justice of the peace filed with the town clerk under subsection (a) of this  
120 section exceeds the number of justices of the peace allowed under this  
121 section, (1) each such applicant who is an incumbent justice of the peace  
122 appointed under this section shall be reappointed if there are sufficient  
123 openings and (2) the town clerk shall, on or before the fifteenth business  
124 day of November, select the remaining applicants to be appointed as  
125 justices of the peace by lot in a ceremony which shall be open to the  
126 public and held on five days' public notice. At such lottery the town  
127 clerk shall determine the order of all such remaining applications for the  
128 purpose of filling future vacancies under subsection (d) of this section.  
129 If a town clerk receives a number of applications that is less than the  
130 number of justices of the peace that he is authorized to appoint under  
131 this section in any year, he shall not appoint any additional justices of  
132 the peace, except as prescribed by subsections (d) and (e) of this section.

133 (c) Justices of the peace appointed in 1994 [.] shall serve a term of two  
134 years beginning on the first Monday in 1995, and justices of the peace  
135 appointed in 1996 and thereafter shall serve a term of four years  
136 beginning on the first Monday in January in the succeeding year.

137 (d) Any vacancy in the office of any such justice of the peace shall be  
138 filled by appointment by the town clerk of an elector qualifying under

139 subsection (a) of this section in the order determined in the lottery held  
 140 under [said] subsection (b) of this section. If no such lottery is held, or  
 141 the number of vacancies exceeds the number of remaining applicants  
 142 determined in the lottery held under subsection (b) of this section, the  
 143 vacancy shall [not] be filled pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

144 (e) If the number of vacancies exceeds the number of remaining  
 145 applicants determined in the lottery held under subsection (b) of this  
 146 section or if no such lottery was held, the town clerk shall make public  
 147 the number of vacancies and the procedure for appointing new justices  
 148 of the peace under this subsection. Any such appointment shall be made  
 149 upon written application submitted not more than thirty days following  
 150 such public notice. No person who has enrollment privileges in the town  
 151 in a political party that selected justices of the peace under section 9-  
 152 183b or 9-183c within the period beginning three months before the  
 153 public notice under this subsection and ending on the date the person is  
 154 to be appointed under this subsection, shall be eligible for such  
 155 appointment. If the number of applications for justice of the peace filed  
 156 with the town clerk under this subsection exceeds the number of  
 157 vacancies, the town clerk shall, not less than ten and not more than  
 158 fifteen days following the close of such applications, select the  
 159 remaining applicants to be appointed as justices of the peace by lottery  
 160 in a ceremony which shall be open to the public and held with five days'  
 161 public notice. At such lottery, the town clerk shall determine the order  
 162 of all such remaining applications for the purpose of filling future  
 163 vacancies under subsection (d) of this section. If a town clerk receives a  
 164 number of applications under this subsection that is less than the  
 165 number of justices of the peace that he is authorized to appoint under  
 166 this section in any year, the town clerk shall not appoint any additional  
 167 justices of the peace.

168 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a  
 169 working group to examine and make recommendations on (1) the  
 170 methods of determining the number of justice of the peace positions in  
 171 each municipality and state-wide; (2) the feasibility of permitting

172 justices of the peace to serve in more than one municipality; (3) the  
173 process by which justices of the peace are selected; (4) potential training,  
174 minimum qualifications, application processes and background check  
175 requirements for justices of the peace; (5) oversight of justices of the  
176 peace, including the potential for levying fines; (6) potential legal  
177 consequences for misrepresenting a person's status as a justice of the  
178 peace; and (7) issues related to reporting human trafficking, forced  
179 marriage and marriage fraud.

180 (b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

181 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,  
182 one of whom is a justice of the peace and one of whom is a representative  
183 of a professional organization for justices of the peace;

184 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who  
185 are town clerks;

186 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of  
187 Representatives, who is a town party chairperson;

188 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who is a  
189 justice of the peace and not a member of a major political party;

190 (5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
191 Representatives, one of whom is a town party chairperson and one of  
192 whom is a town clerk;

193 (6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom  
194 is a justice of the peace and one of whom is a town clerk; and

195 (7) The Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee.

196 (c) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not  
197 later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy  
198 shall be filled by the appointing authority.

199 (d) The Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee, shall be the  
 200 chairperson of the working group and shall schedule the first meeting  
 201 of the working group, which shall be held not later than sixty days after  
 202 the effective date of this section.

203 (e) Not later than January 1, 2026, the working group shall submit a  
 204 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing  
 205 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
 206 relating to government administration and elections, in accordance with  
 207 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, and to the  
 208 Secretary of the State. The working group shall terminate upon the  
 209 submission of such report.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>January 1, 2026</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
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	9-184c
Sec. 6	<i>from passage</i>	New section

***Statement of Purpose:***

To (1) require written examinations of persons selected to hold the office of justice of the peace, (2) prohibit misconduct by justices of the peace, and (3) specify that a newly created office of justice of the peace may be filled by appointment prior to the next regular election.

*[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.]*