



General Assembly

## ***Substitute Bill No. 7150***

*January Session, 2025*



### ***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 October 1, 2025*) (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, including any conduct prohibited by subsection (a)  
12      of section 2 of this act; and

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

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

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

18       (2) Pass the examination developed and administered by the  
19 Secretary pursuant to subsection (c) of this section not later than (A) one  
20 hundred twenty days after an appointment made after January 1, 2026,  
21 or (B) May 1, 2026, if such appointment is made on or before January 1,  
22 2026.

23       (c) The Secretary shall, not later than July 1, 2026, (1) publish on the  
24 Internet web site of the Secretary of the State a manual concerning the  
25 duties of a justice of the peace, and (2) administer a written examination  
26 for persons seeking to hold the office of justice of the peace.

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

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

38       (c) An employer of an individual who holds the office of justice of the  
39 peace shall be liable to any person for damages proximately caused to  
40 that person resulting from the justice of the peace's official misconduct  
41 if (1) such misconduct occurred in the course of business of such  
42 employer, and (2) such employer directed, encouraged, consented to,  
43 ratified or approved the justice of the peace's official misconduct, either  
44 (A) in the particular transaction constituting official misconduct, or (B)  
45 implicitly by such employer's previous actions in at least one similar  
46 transaction constituting official misconduct.

47       (d) An employer of an individual who holds the office of justice of  
48 the peace shall be liable to the justice of the peace for any damages (1)  
49 recovered from the justice of the peace resulting from official

50 misconduct that was coerced by threat of such employer, if such threat,  
51 including, but not limited to, a threat of demotion or dismissal, was  
52 made by such employer (A) in reference to a particular act of the justice  
53 of the peace in the course of business of such employer, or (B) implicitly  
54 by such employer's previous actions in at least one similar transaction,  
55 or (2) caused to the justice of the peace by a demotion, dismissal or other  
56 action by such employer resulting from the justice of the peace's refusal  
57 to commit official misconduct in the course of such employer's business.

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

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

68       (c) The voluntary or involuntary termination, revocation or lapse of  
69 the appointment of a justice of the peace shall not interrupt or preclude  
70 an investigation into any allegation of official misconduct against such  
71 justice of the peace under this section.

72       (d) The Secretary may adopt regulations, in accordance with the  
73 provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, to carry out the purposes  
74 of this section and sections 2 and 3, inclusive, of this act.

75       Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding the  
76 provisions of section 9-183b, 9-183c or 9-184c of the general statutes, as  
77 amended by this act, any vacancy in the office of a justice of the peace,  
78 if such vacancy is created by the adoption of an ordinance or charter  
79 amendment by a municipality that (1) increases the number of justices  
80 of the peace in such municipality, and (2) is effective not less than  
81 ninety-one days prior to the next quadrennial appointment of justices of

82 the peace in the municipality, may be filled by appointment prior to the  
83 next quadrennial appointment by the town committee of any major  
84 party according to the provisions of this section.

85 (b) (1) (A) The town clerk shall select one-third of the total number of  
86 justices of the peace to fill vacancies that are created by the adoption of  
87 such ordinance or charter amendment.

88 (B) The political parties that are major political parties, as defined in  
89 subparagraph (B) of subdivision (5) of section 9-372 of the general  
90 statutes, shall be entitled to nominate an equal number of the total  
91 number of justices of the peace to fill the remaining vacancies created by  
92 the adoption of such ordinance, except in any town where the number  
93 of justices of the peace to be nominated under this section is not divisible  
94 by the number of political parties entitled to nominate justices of the  
95 peace under this section, the registrars of voters shall determine by lot  
96 which of said parties may nominate one more justice of the peace than  
97 may be nominated by the other party or parties. Such nomination by  
98 such parties shall qualify a nominee to serve as a justice of the peace.

99 (2) (A) In the event that a political party that is a major party, as  
100 defined in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (5) of section 9-372 of the  
101 general statutes, but is not a major party, as defined in subparagraph (B)  
102 of said subdivision, is entitled to nominate an individual or individuals  
103 to serve as a justice of the peace to fill any such vacancy, such party shall  
104 be entitled to nominate twenty per cent of the total number of justices of  
105 the peace to fill such vacancies, provided such percentage shall be  
106 rounded down to the nearest whole number. Such nomination by such  
107 parties shall qualify a nominee to serve as a justice of the peace.

108 (B) The town clerk shall select one-third of the total number of justices  
109 of the peace to fill vacancies that are created by the adoption of such  
110 ordinance or charter amendment less the number of justices of the peace  
111 selected under subparagraph (A) of this subdivision to fill such  
112 vacancies.

113 (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-183b, 9-183c or 9-184c

114 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, any person appointed to  
115 fill a vacancy in the office of a justice of the peace pursuant to subsection  
116 (b) of this section shall serve until the next quadrennial appointment of  
117 justices of the peace in the municipality.

118 (d) If a vacancy in the office of a justice of the peace has been filled by  
119 appointment by a town committee, the chairperson or secretary of such  
120 town committee shall file with the town clerk a certificate of each such  
121 appointment, and the town clerk shall record the certificate with the  
122 records of the town meeting. The town clerk shall notify the secretary of  
123 any such appointment.

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

126 (a) In 1994, 1996, and quadrennially thereafter, the town clerk of each  
127 town shall appoint as justice of the peace a number of electors of the  
128 town who are not members of major parties, as defined in section 9-372,  
129 which shall not exceed (1) where no justices of the peace are selected  
130 under section 9-183c, one-third of the total number of justices of the  
131 peace in the town, or (2) where justices of the peace are selected under  
132 section 9-183c, one-third of the total number of justices of the peace in  
133 the town less the number of justices of the peace in the town selected  
134 under section 9-183c. Such percentage shall be rounded up to the nearest  
135 whole number of justices of the peace. Any such appointment shall be  
136 made upon written application submitted on or after August first and  
137 on or before November first, in such year. No person who has  
138 enrollment privileges in the town in a political party which selected  
139 justices of the peace under section 9-183b or under section 9-183c within  
140 the period beginning three months before said August first and ending  
141 on the date the person is to be appointed under this section, shall be  
142 eligible for such appointment. Not later than August 1, 1996, and  
143 quadrennially thereafter, the town clerk shall send a written notice to  
144 each incumbent justice of the peace appointed under this section. Such  
145 notice shall inform such justices of the peace of the procedures set forth  
146 in this section concerning the reappointment of such justices of the

147 peace.

148 (b) If, on November first in such year, the number of applications for  
149 justice of the peace filed with the town clerk under subsection (a) of this  
150 section exceeds the number of justices of the peace allowed under this  
151 section, (1) each such applicant who is an incumbent justice of the peace  
152 appointed under this section shall be reappointed if there are sufficient  
153 openings, and (2) the town clerk shall, on or before the fifteenth business  
154 day of November, select the remaining applicants to be appointed as  
155 justices of the peace by lot in a ceremony which shall be open to the  
156 public and held on five days' public notice. At such lottery the town  
157 clerk shall determine the order of all such remaining applications for the  
158 purpose of filling future vacancies under subsection (d) of this section.  
159 If a town clerk receives a number of applications that is less than the  
160 number of justices of the peace that he is authorized to appoint under  
161 this section in any year, he shall not appoint any additional justices of  
162 the peace, except as prescribed by subsections (d) and (e) of this section.

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

167 (d) Any vacancy in the office of any such justice of the peace shall be  
168 filled by appointment by the town clerk of an elector qualifying under  
169 subsection (a) of this section in the order determined in the lottery held  
170 under [said] subsection (b) of this section. If no such lottery is held, or  
171 the number of vacancies exceeds the number of remaining applicants  
172 determined in the lottery held under subsection (b) of this section, the  
173 vacancy shall [not] be filled pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

174 (e) If the number of vacancies exceeds the number of remaining  
175 applicants determined in the lottery held under subsection (b) of this  
176 section or if no such lottery was held, the town clerk shall make public  
177 the number of vacancies and the procedure for appointing new justices  
178 of the peace under this subsection. Any such appointment shall be made

179 upon written application submitted not more than thirty days following  
180 such public notice. No person who has enrollment privileges in the town  
181 in a political party that selected justices of the peace under section 9-  
182 183b or 9-183c within the period beginning three months before the  
183 public notice under this subsection and ending on the date the person is  
184 to be appointed under this subsection shall be eligible for such  
185 appointment. If the number of applications for justice of the peace filed  
186 with the town clerk under this subsection exceeds the number of  
187 vacancies, the town clerk shall, not less than ten and not more than  
188 fifteen days following the close of such applications, select the  
189 remaining applicants to be appointed as justices of the peace by lottery  
190 in a ceremony which shall be open to the public and held within not less  
191 than five days after the giving of public notice by the town clerk. At such  
192 lottery, the town clerk shall determine the order of all such remaining  
193 applications for the purpose of filling future vacancies under subsection  
194 (d) of this section. If a town clerk receives a number of applications  
195 under this subsection that is less than the number of justices of the peace  
196 that the town clerk is authorized to appoint under this section in any  
197 year, the town clerk shall not appoint any additional justices of the  
198 peace.

199       Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a  
200 working group to examine and make recommendations on (1) the  
201 methods of determining the number of justice of the peace positions in  
202 each municipality and state wide; (2) the portability of a justice of the  
203 peace appointment in one municipality to other municipalities; (3) the  
204 process by which justices of the peace are selected; (4) potential training,  
205 minimum qualifications, application processes and background check  
206 requirements for justices of the peace; (5) oversight of justices of the  
207 peace, including the potential for levying fines; (6) potential legal  
208 consequences for misrepresenting a person's status as a justice of the  
209 peace; and (7) issues related to reporting human trafficking, forced  
210 marriage and marriage fraud.

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

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

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

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

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

221 (5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
222 Representatives, one of whom is a town party chairperson and one of  
223 whom is a town clerk;

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

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

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

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

234 (e) Not later than January 1, 2026, the working group shall submit a  
235 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing  
236 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
237 relating to government administration and elections, in accordance with  
238 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, and to the  
239 Secretary of the State. The working group shall terminate upon the  
240 submission of such report.



This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2025</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

**PD**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*