



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 227**

February Session, 2026

Substitute Senate Bill No. 386

*Senate, March 30, 2026*

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through SEN. FLEXER of the 29th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF RANKED-CHOICE VOTING IN PARTY CAUCUSES, CONVENTIONS AND PRIMARIES, INCLUDING PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARIES, AND IN CERTAIN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2028*) (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Active candidate" means, with respect to a round of tabulation  
3 under ranked-choice voting, a candidate (A) whose name appears on  
4 the ballot or who is registered as a write-in candidate, and (B) who has  
5 not been eliminated, is not a winning candidate and is not a withdrawn  
6 candidate;

7 (2) "Inactive ballot" means, with respect to a given round of tabulation  
8 and all subsequent rounds of tabulation under ranked-choice voting, a  
9 ballot on which no vote is tabulated because (A) no candidate ranked on  
10 the ballot remains an active candidate; or (B) two or more candidates are  
11 ranked at the same order of preference and no other candidates that are

12 ranked higher remain as active candidates;

13 (3) "Ranked-choice voting" means a system of casting and tabulating  
14 votes under which, with respect to a particular office, (A) each elector is  
15 able to rank candidates on the ballot in the order of such elector's  
16 preference, (B) one or more rounds of tabulation are used to determine  
17 active candidates in accordance with electors' preferences, and (C) the  
18 active candidate with the greatest number of votes after all rounds of  
19 tabulation are complete is the winning candidate;

20 (4) "Rank" or "ranking" means an elector's vote expressed in  
21 numerical order of such elector's preferences as to the candidates on the  
22 ballot, where "1" indicates the highest preference and subsequent  
23 numbers indicate lower preferences;

24 (5) "Repeated ranking" means markings on a ballot whereby the same  
25 candidate is ranked at multiple, differing orders of preference;

26 (6) "Skipped ranking" means markings on a ballot whereby an elector  
27 leaves a ranking unassigned but also ranks a candidate at a lower order  
28 of preference;

29 (7) "Undervote" means, with respect to all rounds of tabulation under  
30 ranked-choice voting for a particular office, a ballot on which no vote is  
31 cast due to no candidate being ranked;

32 (8) "Winning candidate" means the candidate with the greatest  
33 number of votes, under ranked-choice voting, after all rounds of  
34 tabulation are complete; and

35 (9) "Withdrawn candidate" means a person (A) whose candidacy has  
36 been withdrawn in accordance with the applicable provision of title 9 of  
37 the general statutes, and (B) in a presidential preference primary, who  
38 complies with all applicable party rules governing the timing,  
39 procedures or substance of candidate withdrawals or campaign  
40 suspensions.

41 (b) (1) Except as prohibited by any provision of title 9 of the general

42 statutes, the outcome of (A) any primary, other than a presidential  
43 preference primary, held on or after January 1, 2028, (B) any municipal  
44 election held on or after January 1, 2028, or (C) any presidential  
45 preference primary held on or after January 1, 2028, may be determined  
46 under ranked-choice voting.

47 (2) (A) For any primary or municipal election determined under  
48 ranked-choice voting for an office to which electors nominate or elect no  
49 more than one candidate, the provisions of subdivision (1) of subsection  
50 (d) of this section shall apply.

51 (B) For any primary or municipal election determined under ranked-  
52 choice voting for offices other than those described in subparagraph (A)  
53 of this subdivision, the provisions of subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of  
54 this section shall not apply.

55 (c) (1) (A) At each primary or municipal election conducted under  
56 ranked-choice voting, the Secretary of the State shall prescribe the type  
57 of ballot to be used, the instructions to appear on such ballot and the  
58 layout and orientation of such ballot. The use of any ballot at any such  
59 primary or municipal election shall be subject to the approval of the  
60 Secretary.

61 (B) The ballot at each primary or municipal election conducted under  
62 ranked-choice voting, or the portion of such ballot used for ranked-  
63 choice voting, shall:

64 (i) List all candidates duly qualified to appear on such ballot for such  
65 primary or municipal election and in such a manner as to allow each  
66 elector who is eligible to vote in such primary or municipal election to  
67 rank all such candidates in the order of such elector's preference. If such  
68 ballot cannot allow for ranking of all such candidates, the Secretary may  
69 limit ranking to not less than five candidates, provided such limitation  
70 by the Secretary shall be uniform with respect to all electors eligible to  
71 vote in such primary or municipal election;

72 (ii) For any primary, list and identify candidates in the order and

73 manner provided in subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, and (g) of section 9-  
74 437 of the general statutes, at a minimum; and

75 (iii) For any municipal election, and for the purposes of sections 9-  
76 249a, 9-372, 9-373b, 9-380, 9-453d and 9-453t of the general statutes,  
77 indicate the party under which designation each candidate appears so  
78 as to enable the elector to specify the party designation of the candidate  
79 being ranked.

80 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-242 of the general  
81 statutes, at each primary or municipal election conducted under ranked-  
82 choice voting, the voting tabulator shall be so constructed as to comply  
83 with the provisions of this section.

84 (d) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, at each  
85 primary or municipal election for an office to which electors nominate  
86 or elect no more than one candidate, and conducted under ranked-  
87 choice voting, each ballot shall be tabulated as one vote cast for the  
88 highest-ranked active candidate on such ballot and tabulation shall  
89 proceed in sequential rounds such that:

90 (A) In a round with three or more active candidates, the candidate  
91 with the least number of votes at the completion of tabulation shall be  
92 eliminated, the vote for such eliminated candidate shall be transferred  
93 to a remaining active candidate in accordance with the ranked  
94 preference expressed on such ballot and all remaining active candidates  
95 shall advance to the next round; and

96 (B) In a round with fewer than three active candidates, the candidate  
97 with the greatest number of votes at the completion of tabulation shall  
98 be declared the winning candidate and no further rounds shall be  
99 required.

100 (2) (A) If at the completion of tabulation a tie occurs between  
101 candidates with the least number of votes and tabulation is unable to  
102 proceed until such tie is resolved, the candidate to be eliminated shall  
103 be determined by lot in accordance with regulations adopted under

104 subsection (f) of this section.

105 (B) If at the completion of tabulation a tie occurs between candidates  
106 with the greatest number of votes, such tie shall be resolved in  
107 accordance with the provisions of (i) section 9-446 of the general statutes  
108 in the case of a primary other than a presidential preference primary, (ii)  
109 section 9-332 of the general statutes in the case of a municipal election,  
110 or (iii) chapter 154 of the general statutes in the case of a presidential  
111 preference primary.

112 (C) (i) If a ballot is an inactive ballot with respect to any round, no  
113 vote shall be tabulated on such ballot for such round.

114 (ii) If a ballot is an undervote, no vote shall be tabulated on such ballot  
115 for all rounds.

116 (iii) If a ballot contains any repeated ranking or skipped ranking with  
117 respect to any round, the vote shall be tabulated on such ballot for the  
118 highest-ranked active candidate.

119 (e) For any primary or municipal election conducted under ranked-  
120 choice voting, the provisions of section 9-445 or 9-311a of the general  
121 statutes, as applicable, shall apply to the difference between the vote for  
122 the winning candidate over the vote for the active candidate having the  
123 next highest number of votes.

124 (f) The Secretary of the State shall adopt regulations, in accordance  
125 with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, to implement  
126 the provisions of this section.

127 Sec. 2. Section 9-173 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
128 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2028*):

129 (a) In the election for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the  
130 State, Treasurer, Comptroller and Attorney General, the person  
131 receiving the greatest number of votes for each of said offices,  
132 respectively, shall be declared elected. If no person has a plurality of the  
133 votes for any of said offices, the General Assembly shall choose such

134 officer.

135 (b) In the election for senator in Congress, the person receiving the  
136 greatest number of votes for such office shall be declared elected; but, if  
137 no person has a plurality of the votes for said office, the Governor may  
138 make a temporary appointment of a senator in Congress to serve for the  
139 ensuing two years unless the General Assembly directs a special election  
140 for a senator in Congress, to be held during said period, to fill the  
141 vacancy occasioned by such failure to elect.

142 (c) In all elections of representatives in Congress, state senators, state  
143 representatives and judges of probate, the person having the greatest  
144 number of votes shall be declared elected. [Unless otherwise provided]

145 (d) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection or by  
146 other law, in all municipal elections a plurality of the votes cast shall be  
147 sufficient to elect.

148 (2) A municipality may, by vote of the electors of such municipality  
149 at a referendum, (A) adopt ranked-choice voting, as defined in section 1  
150 of this act, for the conduct of any municipal election held on or after  
151 January 1, 2028, for any office to which electors elect no more than one  
152 candidate, and (B) implement ranked-choice voting procedures, as  
153 provided in section 1 of this act, at such election.

154 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2028*) (a) As used in this section,  
155 "state office" and "district office" have the same meanings as provided  
156 in section 9-372 of the general statutes.

157 (b) At any political party convention held for the endorsement of any  
158 candidate for nomination to state or district office or the office of state  
159 senator or state representative, if such political party has adopted  
160 ranked-choice voting, as defined in section 1 of this act, pursuant to its  
161 party rules, for the purpose of making such endorsement, as between  
162 three or more candidates, to which the delegates at such convention  
163 endorse no more than one such candidate:

164 (1) The call of a roll and the recording of the vote of each delegate

165 entitled to vote and voting shall not be required; and

166 (2) The determination of the per cent of the votes of the convention  
167 delegates present and voting on any roll-call vote, as described in  
168 section 9-386 of the general statutes, and of any similar reference to the  
169 per cent of such votes, including in sections 9-400 and 9-706 of the  
170 general statutes, shall be the number of votes received in any round of  
171 tabulation by each active candidate, as defined in section 1 of this act, in  
172 the round as a percentage of the votes received by all active candidates  
173 in the round.

174 (c) In all such proceedings for the making of an endorsement for  
175 nomination to a state or district office or the office of state senator or  
176 state representative, the clerk or secretary of such convention shall keep  
177 a true record, in writing, of the number of votes received by each active  
178 candidate in each round of tabulation and of the round-by-round totals  
179 and shall, at the conclusion of the voting and tabulation process,  
180 announce the round-by-round and final results. Such clerk or secretary  
181 shall file such record at the headquarters of the state central committee,  
182 where it shall be preserved for a period of one hundred eighty days after  
183 the adjournment of such convention, and such record shall be open to  
184 public inspection at all reasonable times.

185 Sec. 4. Section 9-444 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
186 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2028*):

187 (a) (1) In the case of a primary for state or district office, each person  
188 certified by the Secretary of the State as provided in section 9-440, to  
189 have received the greatest number of votes of the electors eligible to vote  
190 in a primary for any office shall be deemed to have been chosen as the  
191 nominee of such party to such office.

192 (2) In the case of a primary for a municipal office, the moderator, or  
193 the head moderator, as the case may be, shall declare nominated the  
194 person having the greatest number of votes for such office and, if more  
195 than one person is to be nominated for the same office, he shall declare  
196 nominated the persons having the greatest number of votes for such

197 office up to the number to be chosen.

198 (3) In the case of a primary for members of a town committee, such  
199 moderator shall declare elected the persons having the greatest number  
200 of votes for such positions up to the number to be chosen for such  
201 positions.

202 (4) In the case of a primary for justice of the peace, such moderator  
203 shall declare elected each person on the slate having the greatest number  
204 of votes for such offices. [In]

205 (b) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, in all  
206 primaries, a plurality of the votes cast shall be sufficient to nominate or  
207 elect, as the case may be.

208 (2) A major party may, pursuant to its party rules, (A) adopt ranked-  
209 choice voting, as defined in section 1 of this act, for the conduct of any  
210 primary held on or after January 1, 2028, for any office to which electors  
211 nominate no more than one candidate, and (B) implement ranked-  
212 choice voting procedures, as provided in section 1 of this act, at such  
213 primary. The chairperson or authorized representative of any such  
214 party shall provide notice to the Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's  
215 designee, of such party's adoption in accordance with a process and  
216 timeline established by the Secretary for the provision of such notice.

217 Sec. 5. Section 9-473 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
218 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2028*):

219 (a) The Secretary shall establish a process and deadline for the  
220 certification, by the chairman of each party to the Secretary, of the  
221 number of delegates to which such party is entitled.

222 (b) Not later than the [fourteenth day before the day of the primary]  
223 deadline established by the Secretary pursuant to subsection (a) of this  
224 section, the chairman of each party shall certify in writing to the  
225 [secretary] Secretary the number of delegates to which such party is  
226 entitled pursuant to its rules. If such rules provide that such delegates  
227 are to be chosen from districts, the chairman shall also certify the



228 number of delegates allocated to each district and the number to be  
229 selected at large, if any. Such rules (1) may [(1)] provide for ranked-  
230 choice voting, as defined in section 1 of this act, at any presidential  
231 preference primary held on or after January 1, 2028, and (2) may (A)  
232 prescribe a formula for the allocation of delegates to candidates based  
233 upon the percentages of the total votes cast for, or received in any round  
234 of tabulation under ranked-choice voting by, such candidates at the  
235 primary, or [(2)] (B) require that all delegates shall be allocated to the  
236 candidate [receiving] for whom the greatest number of votes were cast,  
237 or by whom the greatest number of votes were received in any round of  
238 tabulation under ranked-choice voting, notwithstanding such  
239 candidate's percentage of the total votes cast for all candidates. If such  
240 rules prescribe a formula for the allocation of delegates to candidates  
241 based upon the percentages of the total votes cast for, or received in any  
242 round of tabulation under ranked-choice voting by, such candidates at  
243 the primary, the chairman shall also certify such formula and all  
244 information necessary for the application of such formula to the results  
245 of the primary.

246 (c) The chairman of a party shall furnish to the [secretary] Secretary,  
247 upon request, a written interpretation or explanation of any ranked-  
248 choice voting provided for by such party's rules, or any application of  
249 [such] a delegate allocation formula prescribed, under subsection (b) of  
250 this section.

251 Sec. 6. Section 9-476 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
252 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2028*):

253 (a) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter or required for the  
254 purposes of implementing ranked-choice voting, as defined in section 1  
255 of this act, the provisions of chapter 145 and chapter 153 concerning  
256 absentee voting at primaries, conduct of primaries and return and  
257 tabulation of the vote at such primaries shall apply, as nearly as  
258 practicable and in the manner prescribed by the Secretary, [of the State,]  
259 to a presidential preference primary.

260 (b) If a party's rules so provide pursuant to subdivision (1) of

261 subsection (b) of section 9-473, as amended by this act, each presidential  
262 preference primary held on or after January 1, 2028, shall be conducted  
263 under ranked-choice voting. The Secretary shall issue written  
264 instructions for the implementation of policies and procedures  
265 regarding tabulation and publication of preliminary and final results,  
266 including round-by-round results. Such instructions shall provide that  
267 if a candidate withdraws as of the day of the primary in accordance with  
268 applicable law, any ballot cast prior to the day of the primary on which  
269 such candidate was the highest-ranked candidate shall be counted as a  
270 vote for the next highest-ranked candidate on such ballot. Such  
271 instructions shall take into account any procedures requested in writing  
272 by the chairman of the party holding such primary, which procedures  
273 are reasonable, compatible with the use of ranked-choice voting ballots  
274 and capable of being implemented using existing voting tabulators,  
275 including any associated hardware and software. The Secretary shall  
276 post all such written instructions on the Internet web site of the office of  
277 the Secretary of the State.

278 (c) The primary officials of each party for each polling place shall be  
279 as specified in section 9-436, except that (1) the appointment of assistant  
280 registrars of voters and absentee ballot counters shall be permitted but  
281 not required, (2) the minimum number of official checkers shall be one,  
282 (3) the minimum number of voting tabulator tenders shall be one for  
283 each two voting tabulators in use, (4) if two parties are holding  
284 primaries and the registrars of voters of such parties so agree, such  
285 registrars of voters may jointly appoint (A) one moderator of both  
286 primaries and (B) one enrolled member of either party to serve as head  
287 moderator of both primaries, (5) notwithstanding any reduction in the  
288 number of primary officials as permitted by this section, any duty  
289 required of primary officials by the general statutes may be performed  
290 by one or more primary officials, at the direction of the registrar of  
291 voters of the party of such officials, and (6) the registrar of voters shall  
292 have the sole power to appoint such officials. In making such  
293 appointments the registrar shall attempt, to the extent practicable, to  
294 provide representation for each candidate at each polling place. The  
295 provisions of section 9-436a shall apply to each candidate whose name

296 appears on the ballot, except that each such candidate, through such  
297 candidate's authorized or known representative, may submit to the  
298 registrar of voters the name of one designee as candidate checker for  
299 each polling place, and the registrar of voters shall appoint such  
300 designee as candidate checker for such candidate.

301 (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-438, the polls shall be  
302 open for voting at the primary between the hours of six o'clock a.m. and  
303 eight o'clock p.m.

304 (e) The moderator or head moderator of the primary in each town  
305 shall prepare duplicate head moderator returns in the manner provided  
306 by section 9-440, but notwithstanding the provisions of said section, the  
307 moderator or head moderator may electronically transmit such returns  
308 not later than eleven fifty-nine o'clock p.m. on primary day, provided a  
309 hard copy is mailed to the Secretary [of the State] not later than two  
310 o'clock p.m. of the day following the primary or shall hand deliver one  
311 of such returns to either the Secretary or the state police by two o'clock  
312 p.m. of the day following the primary. Any moderator or head  
313 moderator, as the case may be, who fails to deliver such returns to either  
314 the Secretary or the state police by such time shall pay a late filing fee of  
315 fifty dollars.

316 Sec. 7. Section 9-484 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
317 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2028*):

318 (a) If a party's chairman did not certify (1) a formula pursuant to  
319 section 9-473, as amended by this act, or (2) a requirement that all  
320 delegates shall be allocated to the candidate receiving the greatest  
321 number of votes notwithstanding such candidate's percentage of the  
322 total votes cast for all candidates, the [secretary] Secretary shall  
323 determine the number of delegates to be so allocated to each candidate  
324 of each such party in accordance with the provisions of this section,  
325 provided such allocations when the party rules do not provide for  
326 ranked-choice voting shall be made under subsection (b) of this section  
327 and such allocations when the party rules do provide for ranked-choice  
328 voting shall be made under subsection (c) of this section. As used in this

329 section, "ranked-choice voting", "active candidate" and "withdrawn  
330 candidate" have the same meanings as provided in section 1 of this act.

331 (b) [Such determination shall be made separately for delegates to be  
332 selected at large and delegates to be selected from each district. Any] (1)  
333 For allocations under this subsection when party rules do not provide  
334 for ranked-choice voting, any percentage required to be determined, in  
335 accordance with the provisions of this [section] subsection, shall be  
336 rounded off to the nearest one-tenth of one per cent. As used in this  
337 [section] subsection, "minimum percentage" means the ratio, expressed  
338 as a percentage, that the number one bears to the total number of  
339 delegates to be selected, but in no event shall such percentage exceed  
340 twenty-five per cent.

341 [(c)] (2) (A) The [secretary] Secretary shall calculate the minimum  
342 percentage, as defined in [subsection (b) of this section] subdivision (1)  
343 of this subsection, using the number of delegates to be selected at large  
344 and, if applicable, the number of delegates to be selected from each  
345 district respectively. Except as provided in this [subsection] subdivision,  
346 a candidate's percentage of the total votes cast for all candidates in the  
347 state or in a district [must] is required to equal or exceed such minimum  
348 percentage in order for such candidate to be allocated any at large  
349 delegates or any delegates from such district, as the case may be. The  
350 [secretary] Secretary shall determine each candidate's percentage of the  
351 total votes cast for all candidates in the state and in each district. In the  
352 event two or more candidates have received a percentage of such total  
353 votes cast equal to or greater than the minimum percentage, the  
354 [secretary] Secretary shall calculate an adjusted percentage, which shall  
355 be each such candidate's percentage of the total votes cast for all such  
356 candidates, excluding the votes cast for all other candidates. The  
357 [secretary] Secretary shall then calculate the product of each such  
358 candidate's adjusted percentage and the total number of delegates to be  
359 selected, rounding off such product to the nearest integer. Such product  
360 shall be the number of delegates allocated to each such candidate except  
361 as hereinafter provided.

362 [(1)] (B) If the rounding off of such products to the nearest integers  
363 causes the sum of all delegates so allocated to be greater than the total  
364 number of delegates to be selected at large or from the district, then one  
365 delegate shall be subtracted from the number allocated to the candidate  
366 who received the greatest mathematical gain from such rounding off,  
367 and if necessary one delegate shall also be subtracted from the number  
368 allocated to the candidate who received the next greatest gain, and so  
369 on until the sum of all delegates allocated to candidates equals the total  
370 number of delegates to be so selected.

371 [(2)] (C) If the rounding off of such products to the nearest integers  
372 causes the sum of all delegates so allocated to be fewer than the total  
373 number of delegates to be selected at large or from the district, then one  
374 delegate shall be added to the number allocated to the candidate who  
375 suffered the greatest mathematical loss from such rounding off, and if  
376 necessary one delegate shall also be added to the number allocated to  
377 the candidate who suffered the next greatest such loss, and so on until  
378 the sum of all delegates allocated to candidates equals the total number  
379 of delegates to be so selected.

380 [(d)] (3) In the event one or no candidate has received a percentage of  
381 the total number of votes cast for all candidates equal to or greater than  
382 the minimum percentage, the [secretary] Secretary shall calculate an  
383 adjusted percentage for each of the candidates receiving the greatest and  
384 second greatest number of votes cast for all candidates. The adjusted  
385 percentage shall be such candidate's percentage of the total number of  
386 votes cast for both such candidates, excluding the total number of votes  
387 cast for all other candidates. The [secretary] Secretary shall determine  
388 the number of delegates allocated to each candidate by using the same  
389 procedure as prescribed in [subsection (c) of this section] subdivision (2)  
390 of this subsection.

391 (c) (1) For allocations under this subsection when party rules provide  
392 for ranked-choice voting, the Secretary shall determine the number of  
393 delegates, if any, to be allocated at large to each candidate and, if  
394 applicable, the number of delegates, if any, to be allocated to each

395 candidate from each district respectively. An active candidate's  
396 percentage of the votes received by all active candidates in the state or  
397 in a district is required to equal or exceed fifteen per cent in order for  
398 such candidate to be allocated any at large delegates or any delegates  
399 from such district, as the case may be. The Secretary shall determine  
400 each candidate's percentage of the votes received by all active  
401 candidates under ranked-choice voting in the state and in each district.  
402 Each ballot shall count as one vote for the highest-ranked candidate on  
403 such ballot and shall be deemed a vote for delegates pledged to support  
404 such candidate in accordance with party rules or applicable provisions  
405 of this title. Any rankings for withdrawn candidates shall be treated as  
406 rankings for eliminated candidates. If the vote total for any active  
407 candidate is less than fifteen per cent, the active candidate with the  
408 fewest votes shall be eliminated and the votes for the eliminated  
409 candidate shall be counted for each ballot's next highest-ranked active  
410 candidate. If the vote total of all active candidates is above fifteen per  
411 cent, tabulation shall be complete. For the purpose of section 9-482,  
412 votes cast for a candidate and each candidate's percentage of total votes  
413 shall be determined by the Secretary on the basis of the votes received  
414 in the final round of tabulation. The Secretary shall then calculate the  
415 product of each such active candidate's percentage and the total number  
416 of delegates to be selected, rounding off such product to the nearest  
417 integer. Such product shall be the number of delegates allocated to each  
418 such candidate except as hereinafter provided.

419 (2) If the rounding off of such products to the nearest integers causes  
420 the sum of all delegates so allocated to be greater than the total number  
421 of delegates to be selected at large or from the district, then one delegate  
422 shall be subtracted from the number allocated to the candidate who  
423 received the greatest mathematical gain from such rounding off, and if  
424 necessary one delegate shall also be subtracted from the number  
425 allocated to the candidate who received the next greatest gain, and so  
426 on until the sum of all delegates allocated to candidates equals the total  
427 number of delegates to be so selected.

428 (3) If the rounding off of such products to the nearest integers causes

429 the sum of all delegates so allocated to be fewer than the total number  
 430 of delegates to be selected at large or from the district, then one delegate  
 431 shall be added to the number allocated to the candidate who suffered  
 432 the greatest mathematical loss from such rounding off, and if necessary  
 433 one delegate shall also be added to the number allocated to the  
 434 candidate who suffered the next greatest such loss, and so on until the  
 435 sum of all delegates allocated to candidates equals the total number of  
 436 delegates to be so selected.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	January 1, 2028	New section
Sec. 2	January 1, 2028	9-173
Sec. 3	January 1, 2028	New section
Sec. 4	January 1, 2028	9-444
Sec. 5	January 1, 2028	9-473
Sec. 6	January 1, 2028	9-476
Sec. 7	January 1, 2028	9-484

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 3(c), "or the office of state senator or state representative" was added for consistency with other provisions of the section.

**GAE**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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 27 \$	FY 28 \$	FY 29 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	973,000	1.4 million	306,000
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits <sup>1</sup>	GF - Cost	91,000	152,000	116,000

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:**

Municipalities	Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$	FY 29 \$
All Municipalities	STATE MANDATE <sup>2</sup> - Potential Cost	None	1.1 million	1.1 million to 2.4 million

**Explanation**

The bill allows ranked choice voting (RCV) for all primaries and municipal elections beginning in FY 28 if state parties and municipalities, respectively, choose to adopt it, resulting in a cost to the General Fund of approximately \$1.1 million in FY 27 and \$1.5 million in FY 28, and a potential cost to municipalities of approximately \$1.1 million in FY 28. Costs shift in the out years as described below.

<sup>1</sup>The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.82% of payroll in FY 27.

<sup>2</sup> 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.



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**Secretary of the State**

The bill results in Personal Services Costs to SOTS of \$216,000 in FY 27 and \$362,000 in FY 28, associated with four new positions needed to implement RCV, assuming that either a political party or any town adopts RCV. SOTS must preapprove RCV ballots prior to printing and usage, requiring SOTS to hire one employee<sup>3</sup> at a cost of \$130,000 in FY 27 and annually thereafter, with an associated annual fringe cost of \$55,000. Additionally, SOTS will require two<sup>4</sup> positions at an annual combined cost of \$146,000 beginning in FY 28, with an associated fringe cost of \$61,000. These positions are needed to implement and oversee the development of the RCV process, and to approve and oversee the design of RCV ballots in each participating municipality to comply with the provisions of the bill. Finally, to develop RCV regulations, SOTS will need to hire an additional durational staff member<sup>5</sup> at a cost of \$86,000 in both FY 27 and FY 28, with an associated fringe cost of \$36,000 in FY 27 and FY 28.

The bill also results in an Other Expenses cost to SOTS of \$757,000 in FY 27 and \$1.03 million in FY 28, primarily related to voting equipment and technology needs, along with a public information campaign. Upgrades to the state's Election Management System are required to process RCV ballots and produce RCV results, which has a one-time cost to SOTS of \$650,000 in FY 27. There is also a \$85,000 cost in FY 27 to upgrade the election night reporting system, with an ongoing annual cost of \$30,000 beginning in FY 28, as the system will be more expensive to operate due to RCV. Because of the additional complexity of operating the system, SOTS will incur an additional cost of \$22,000 in FY 27 to develop training for registrars and poll workers to facilitate RCV.

To support participating municipalities, SOTS will need to conduct a public information campaign to inform the public of changes to current

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<sup>3</sup>This position is an RCV Program Manager position.

<sup>4</sup>These positions include an Administrative Assistant and an Elections Officer.

<sup>5</sup> This position is a Staff Attorney I.

procedures, towards the goal of reducing the number of ineligible ballots, resulting in a one-time cost of \$1 million in FY 28.

### **Municipalities**

The bill empowers but does not require municipalities to use RCV beginning in FY 28 in municipal elections, and municipalities would be required to use RCV if adopted by a major party, resulting in a potential aggregate cost to municipalities of \$1.1 million<sup>6</sup> if a party adopts RCV for the presidential preference primary in spring 2028. This cost includes additional labor and printing expenses associated with implementing RCV. Per town costs are anticipated to range from: (1) \$2,000 to \$4,500 for towns with up to 10,000 registered voters, to (2) \$30,000 up to \$65,500 for towns with more than 50,000 registered voters.

### **The Out Years**

The cost to implement RCV is expected to shift again in the out years, with a total annual cost to the General Fund of \$422,000 beginning in FY 29 and an annual cost to municipalities of between \$1.1 million and \$2.4 million beginning in FY 29.

The SOTS cost will decline to \$306,000 annually beginning in FY 29. The change in the cost to SOTS reflects the conclusion at the end of FY 28 of both the durational position and the public information campaign. The SOTS-associated fringe cost will decrease to \$116,000 annually.

The potential cost to municipalities is expected to range from \$1.1 million<sup>7</sup> and \$2.4 million<sup>8</sup> in the aggregate due to the increased number of applicable elections in which RCV could be used. In FY 28, only the presidential preference primary would be eligible to see RCV

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<sup>6</sup> This figure assumes full implementation of RCV for the Presidential Preference Primary beginning in FY 28. This is based on the median cost (\$0.43) per registered voter from [the National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\) ranked choice voting survey](#).

<sup>7</sup> This is based on the median cost (\$0.43) per registered voter from [the National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\) ranked choice voting survey](#).

<sup>8</sup> This is based on the average (\$0.94) cost per registered voter from the [NCSL ranked choice voting survey](#).

utilization; more elections occur in FY 29 and beyond. The exact cost in the out years will vary by town and will depend on the number of towns that adopt RCV, as well as whether a major party adopts RCV for primaries.

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future, subject to inflation, applicable elections, and the number of municipalities and parties that adopt RCV as a result of the bill.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 386*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF RANKED-CHOICE VOTING IN PARTY CAUCUSES, CONVENTIONS AND PRIMARIES, INCLUDING PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARIES, AND IN CERTAIN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill authorizes ranked-choice voting (RCV) for certain municipal elections, presidential preference primaries, and all other primaries starting January 1, 2028, except when prohibited by the state's election laws. Under the bill, RCV is a system of casting and counting votes for a particular office where (1) each voter can rank candidates based on their preferences (with "1" indicating their highest preference), (2) one or more rounds of counting are used to determine which candidates advance to the next round of counting based on those preferences, and (3) the candidate with the greatest number of votes after all rounds of counting wins.

Specifically, starting in 2028, for offices where only one candidate is chosen, the bill authorizes (1) municipalities to adopt RCV for municipal elections through a vote of the municipality's electors at a referendum and (2) major parties to adopt RCV for primaries under their party rules. A municipality or major party must implement the bill's procedures when adopting RCV. As under existing law and the bill, candidates for offices or party nominations not subject to RCV must receive a plurality of votes (the most).

The bill also establishes specific procedures for implementing RCV generally and, starting in 2028, for major parties adopting it for presidential preference primaries under their party rules. It also makes corresponding changes for political party nominating conventions using RCV.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2028

## **§ 1 — RCV GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

### ***Ballots and Tabulators***

The bill requires the secretary of the state to set the type of ballot to be used in authorized RCV elections or primaries, the ballot's layout and orientation, and any instructions appearing on it. Further, any RCV ballot must be approved by the secretary.

The bill generally requires an RCV ballot to list all qualified candidates in a way allowing voters to rank them by order of preference. If it is not possible to do so, the secretary must allow voters to rank at least five candidates and must uniformly apply this limitation to all eligible voters for that office.

For primaries, candidates must be ordered on the ballot as existing law requires (see BACKGROUND). For municipal elections, existing law considers a candidate's party designation to (1) determine the candidate's order on the ballot, (2) determine whether a party achieved minor party status for a particular race (see BACKGROUND), and (3) allow for cross endorsements. For these purposes, the bill requires RCV ballots to indicate a candidate's party designation, allowing voters to rank candidates under a specific designation.

Relatedly, state law requires that voting tabulators be able to process ballots under certain conditions and produce certain voting information, such as preventing a voter from voting for more than one candidate for the same office unless otherwise allowed. The bill requires that voting tabulators used for authorized RCV primaries and elections be able to comply with the bill's procedures.

### ***Procedures***

The bill establishes the following requirements for RCV contests in which voters nominate or elect only one candidate.

**Voting Tabulation.** In the first round of counting, the bill requires that a ballot be counted for the highest-ranked active candidate. Under the bill, an “active candidate” is a candidate on the ballot (or registered as a write-in candidate) who has not won, been eliminated in an earlier round, or withdrawn.

If three or more active candidates remain after the first round, the active candidate with the fewest votes after all votes have been tabulated is eliminated, and the remaining active candidates proceed to the next round. The votes for the eliminated candidate are transferred to the remaining active candidates based on the rank expressed on the ballots. This process continues until there are less than three active candidates. Once this has occurred, the active candidate with the most votes wins.

**Tie Votes.** If there is a tie between the candidates with the fewest votes, and one must be eliminated, the elimination is determined by lot, as set in regulations that the bill requires the secretary to adopt (see below). If there is a tie between the final two candidates, the tie is broken in accordance with the applicable state law.

**Voter Ranking Issues.** Under the bill, a voter’s ballot is not counted if it ranks no active candidate (an undervote). If a ballot skips a number when ranking candidates or ranks the same candidate at different ranks (for example, cross-endorsed candidates), the ballot is counted for the highest-ranked active candidate. A voter’s ballot is no longer counted if all the candidates the voter ranked are no longer active, or if the voter ranked two candidates at the same level (for example, ranked two different candidates as their second choice) and all higher-ranked candidates are no longer active (an inactive ballot).

**Recanvass.** Existing law generally requires a recanvass (recount) to be conducted if the difference in votes between the top two candidates is (1) less than 0.5% of the total number of votes cast for the office, but not more than 1,000 votes for a primary or not more than 2,000 votes for an election, or (2) less than 20 votes. To determine if an automatic recount is triggered under these provisions for an RCV election or

primary, the bill requires evaluating the difference between the total votes of the winning candidate and the remaining active candidate.

### **Regulations**

The bill requires the secretary of the state to adopt regulations to implement these provisions.

### **§§ 3 & 4 — PARTY CONVENTION-SPECIFIC PROVISIONS**

When a major party adopts RCV as part of its rules, the bill requires the party's chairperson or authorized representative to notify the secretary of the state, or her designee, following the process and timeline she established.

For parties that have adopted RCV, the bill also establishes certain exemptions or procedures when endorsing candidates for nomination to state or district office or state legislator at political party conventions. Specifically, the provisions below apply when choosing among three or more candidates and only one candidate may be endorsed (a covered convention).

**Voting and Records.** Whenever a vote is taken on a party's endorsement between two or more candidates, current law requires the convention's clerk or secretary to conduct it by roll call and record each delegate's vote. The bill eliminates this requirement for covered conventions.

Additionally, similar to the existing law for roll call votes, the bill requires a convention's clerk or secretary to (1) keep an accurate written record of the vote totals each active candidate received in each RCV round, as well as the round-by-round totals; (2) announce the round-by-round and final results; and (3) file these records at the state central committee headquarters. The records must be kept for at least 180 days after the convention adjourns and be available for public inspection at all reasonable times.

**Eligibility Threshold.** Various state laws require candidates to receive a certain percentage of any roll call vote at a convention to meet

the law's requirements. For example, the law allows any candidate who received at least 15% of the vote to qualify to run in the party's primary. The law also requires a candidate to receive at least 15% of the vote in order to qualify for a public campaign finance grant from the Citizens' Election Program. The bill specifies that in these and other similar situations under state law, the required percentage may be calculated based on the percentage of votes a candidate received in any RCV round at a covered convention.

### **§§ 5-7 — PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY**

A presidential preference primary is a type of primary election in which voters indicate their preference for a particular candidate to be the party's nominee for the presidency. State law requires the parties with the largest and second-largest number of enrolled members in the state to hold a presidential preference primary if the names of two or more candidates are placed on the party's ballot (CGS §§ 9-463 & -464).

In a presidential preference primary, voters do not directly select the party's nominee. Instead, they vote for a particular candidate, and based on the vote results, state parties award delegates based on the party's system of allocating delegates. These delegates then vote to formally select a candidate as the presidential nominee at the party's national convention.

#### ***Applicable Laws (§ 6)***

The law generally requires that presidential preference primaries, including any tabulations or generation of returns, be conducted, as nearly as practicable, in a manner set by the secretary of the state, with the state's laws on absentee balloting and political party nominations. Currently, they must do so unless the state's laws concerning presidential primaries say otherwise. The bill also makes an exception if implementing RCV requires otherwise.

#### ***Delegate Certification (§ 5)***

By law, a party's chairman must submit a written certification to the secretary of the state with the number of delegates the party is entitled



to under its rules. If any delegates are to be chosen from districts, the chairman must also certify the number of delegates allocated to each district and the number selected at large.

Additionally, the law allows a party to make rules (1) establishing a formula for allocating delegates based on the percentage of the total votes they receive or (2) allocating all the delegates to the candidate with the most votes (winner-take-all). If a formula is used, the chairman must include it in the certification along with all necessary information to apply it. The secretary may request a written interpretation or explanation of the formula's application.

Currently, the party's chairman must submit this certification at least 14 days before a primary. The bill eliminates this deadline and instead requires the secretary to establish the process and deadline for these certifications.

By law, if the chairman does not certify how the delegates will be distributed, the secretary must determine the allocation of delegates generally in accordance with the party rules. The law, unchanged by the bill, establishes procedures for the secretary to make this determination when RCV is not used.

### ***Allocating Delegates (§§ 5 & 7)***

***Party Rules (§ 5).*** The bill allows a party to authorize RCV through its rules starting in 2028. If it does so, it must use RCV to allocate its delegates. The rules may establish procedures for awarding delegates based on RCV (whether by formula or winner-take-all). The secretary may request a written interpretation or explanation of a party's RCV rules.

***Secretary Determination (§ 7).*** The bill establishes alternative allocation procedures for major parties that permit RCV but have not certified how its delegates will be allocated. By law, the secretary must determine (1) the number of delegates to be awarded at large, (2) those to be awarded by district (if any), and (3) the percentage of the vote received by each candidate in the state and each district. Under the bill,

each ballot must initially be deemed to count for the highest-ranked candidate and the vote awarded to delegates pledged to vote for that candidate, as required under the applicable party's rules or state law.

By law, the secretary must also determine the number of votes cast for each candidate and the total number of votes cast, including the totals of each district, if applicable. Under the bill, for RCV primaries, these totals must be based on the final tabulation of votes.

Under the bill's RCV procedures, to receive any delegates, a candidate must receive at least 15% of the total vote in the entire state or a specific district, as applicable. The tabulation is considered complete if the vote total for all active candidates is 15% or greater. If any active candidate has less than 15%, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and that candidate's votes are transferred to the candidates ranked next by each ballot. Any rankings for withdrawn candidates are treated as rankings for eliminated candidates.

Once the tabulation is complete, the secretary must calculate the number of delegates to be awarded for each candidate by multiplying each candidate's vote percentage by the total number of delegates to be selected, rounding off to the nearest whole number.

If, due to the rounding, the total number of awarded delegates for all candidates does not match the authorized number of delegates, the secretary must add or subtract a delegate, as necessary, from the candidate who had the largest difference between the calculated number and the rounded number. She must continue this process for the candidates with the next largest differences until the number of allocated delegates equals the authorized number.

#### ***Secretary's Written Instructions (§ 6)***

The bill requires the secretary to issue, and publish on her office's website, written instructions for implementing policies and procedures regarding tabulating and publishing preliminary, round-by-round, and final RCV results. (The bill does not establish a deadline by which the secretary must do so.) The instructions must also require that if a

candidate withdraws on the day of the primary as allowed by law, any ballot cast before the primary ranking that candidate first must be counted as a vote for the next-highest-ranked candidate on the ballot.

The instructions must also consider procedures requested in writing by a party's chairman if the party uses RCV, that are reasonable, compatible with the use of RCV ballots, and can be implemented using existing voting tabulators, including any associated hardware and software.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Ballot Order for Primary Candidates***

State law generally requires the secretary to (1) place the party-endorsed candidate in the first row of the ballot and mark the name with an asterisk and (2) order all other candidates alphabetically based on the candidate's last name (CGS § 9-437).

### ***Minor Party Status***

Under Connecticut's election system, candidates running for office can get their names on the ballot in one of three ways: (1) nomination by a major party (CGS § 9-381 et. seq.), (2) nomination by a minor party (CGS § 9-451 et. seq.), and (3) nomination by a nominating petition (CGS § 9-453 et. seq.). The law differentiates how a candidate may gain ballot access depending on whether the party is major or minor.

Under existing law, a "minor party" is one that is not a major party and whose candidate for the office in question received, under the same party designation, at least 1% of the votes cast for the same office at the last regular election. In other words, unlike major parties, minor parties qualify for ballot access on a case-by-case basis and cannot nominate candidates to offices for which they have not achieved minor party status (CGS § 9-372).

By law, if the party does not have minor party status for a particular office, a person may run under the party's designation only by

submitting a signed petition to the secretary of the state. By law, it must be signed by (1) 1% of the qualified electors for the same office in the last-preceding election or (2) 7,500 qualified electors (1% is usually the lower threshold and therefore the one most petitioners must meet) (CGS § 9-453d). For example, if a person is running for state senator, the petition must be signed by a total number of voters that equals 1% of all the voters that cast a ballot for the same state senate race in the last election.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13    Nay 6    (03/11/2026)