



Substitute House Bill No. 5001

Public Act No. 26-42

AN ACT CONCERNING ABSENTEE VOTING FOR ALL AND VARIOUS OTHER REFORMS RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS.

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

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 Section 9-135 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

[(a)] Any elector eligible to vote at a primary or an election and any person eligible to vote at a referendum may vote by absentee ballot, [if such elector or person is unable to appear at such elector's or person's polling place on the day of such primary, election or referendum for any of the following reasons: (1) Such elector's or person's active service with the armed forces of the United States; (2) such elector's or person's absence from the town of such elector's or person's voting residence; (3) sickness; (4) physical disability; (5) the tenets of such elector's or person's religion forbid secular activity on the day of such primary, election or referendum; or (6) the required performance of such elector's or person's duties as a primary, election or referendum official, including as a town clerk or registrar of voters or as staff of the clerk or registrar, at a polling place other than such elector's or person's own during all of the hours of voting at such primary, election or referendum] provided such elector properly completes and submits an absentee ballot application in

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

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

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 Section 9-137 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Each absentee ballot shall be returned to the municipal clerk, inserted in [an inner] a return envelope which shall be capable of being sealed and which shall have printed on its face a form containing the following [statements] statement:

"I hereby state under the penalties of false statement in absentee balloting that I am eligible to vote at the primary, election or referendum in the municipality in which this absentee ballot is to be cast. [and that I expect to be unable to appear at my polling place on the day of such primary, election or referendum for one or more of the following reasons: (1) My active service in the armed forces; (2) my absence from the town in which I am eligible to vote; (3) sickness; (4) physical disability; (5) the tenets of my religion which forbid secular activity on the day of such primary, election or referendum; or (6) my duties as a primary, election or referendum official.]

Date

.... (Signature)

.... (Printed name)"

(b) Each such return envelope shall also be endorsed on the outside with the words "OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOT" and bear a label generated by the state-wide centralized voter registration system described in section 9-50b. Such label shall include (1) (A) the name and

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

return address of the sender, (B) the applicant's name and voting residence by street and number, (C) the applicant's voting district, (D) the ballot style, (E) the unique ballot identification number, appearing both in a text format and as a scannable barcode, and (F) the date of the primary, election or referendum at which the ballot is to be cast and, if the absentee ballot is to be cast at a primary, the name of the party holding the primary, and (2) a notice, sufficient to warn any person handling the ballot, of the restrictions set forth in section 9-140b, as amended by this act, concerning who may possess or return the ballot and the restrictions and penalties set forth in section 9-359 concerning the completion or execution of absentee ballots. The clerk shall also inscribe such clerk's official address for the return of the ballot on the return envelope prior to issuance of the ballot and return envelope.

Sec. 3. Section 9-139a of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) The Secretary of the State shall prescribe and furnish the following materials to municipal clerks: The absentee ballot facsimile, the application for absentee ballot authorized for use at each election or primary, the privacy sleeve, the [inner envelope, the outer] envelope provided for [the return of] returning the ballot with the privacy sleeve to the municipal clerk, the instructions for [the use of] using the absentee ballot and privacy sleeve and the envelope for mailing of such forms by the clerk to the absentee ballot applicant.

(b) The application for absentee ballot shall be in the form of a statement signed under the penalties of false statement in absentee balloting. Each application shall contain (1) spaces for the signature under the penalties of false statement in absentee balloting of any person who assists the applicant in the completion of an application together with the information required in section 9-140, as amended by this act, (2) spaces for the signature and the printed or typed name of the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

applicant, and (3) a clear and conspicuous notation of the year for which such application's use is authorized.

(c) The Secretary of the State shall prescribe and furnish to the Department of Correction an application for absentee ballot form for use within Department of Correction facilities. Such form shall contain spaces for all information required under subsection (b) of this section. Each such form shall be consecutively numbered and shall indicate that such form is only for use by an absentee ballot applicant who is incarcerated in a Department of Correction facility and that such applicant is required to provide in the appropriate space on such form a mailing address at the Department of Correction facility in order for an absentee ballot to be mailed to such applicant.

(d) The instructions for [the use of] using the absentee ballot and privacy sleeve shall be in plain language and shall include the steps to be taken if a vote is to be cancelled or changed, and shall also contain a simple and concise restatement of the provisions of subsection [(l)] (k) of section 9-150a, as amended by this act, [and section 9-159o] concerning rejection of ballots marked in such manner as to identify the voters casting them. [, and withdrawal of ballots by persons who find they are able to vote at the polls.]

(e) A sufficient supply of such instructions, privacy sleeves and envelopes shall be printed to supply the number which the municipal clerk requests or the Secretary of the State deems sufficient.

Sec. 4. Section 9-140 of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) (1) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, application for an absentee ballot shall be made to the clerk of the municipality in which the applicant is eligible to vote or has applied for such eligibility.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

Any person who assists another person in the completion of an application shall, in the space provided, sign the application and print or type [his] such person's name, residence address and telephone number, except that any employee of the Department of Correction who so assists an incarcerated applicant shall provide the address and telephone number of the department facility to which such employee is assigned in lieu of such employee's residence address and telephone number. Such signature shall be made under the penalties of false statement in absentee balloting. The municipal clerk shall not invalidate the application solely because it does not contain the name of a person who assisted the applicant in the completion of the application. The municipal clerk shall not distribute with an absentee ballot application any material which promotes the success or defeat of any candidate or referendum question. The municipal clerk shall maintain a log of all absentee ballot applications provided under this subsection, including the name and address of each person to whom applications are provided and the number of applications provided to each such person. Each absentee ballot application provided by the municipal clerk shall [be consecutively numbered] display a unique ballot identification number and be stamped or marked with the name of the municipality issuing the application. The application shall be signed by the applicant under the penalties of false statement in absentee balloting on (A) the form prescribed by the Secretary of the State pursuant to section 9-139a, as amended by this act, (B) a form provided by any federal department or agency if applicable pursuant to section 9-153a, or (C) any of the special forms of application prescribed pursuant to section 9-150c, 9-153a, 9-153b, as amended by this act, 9-153d, 9-153e, as amended by this act, 9-153f, as amended by this act, or 9-158d, if applicable. Any such absentee ballot applicant who is unable to write may cause the application to be completed by an authorized agent who shall, in the spaces provided for the date and signature, write the date and name of the absentee ballot applicant followed by the word "by" and [his] such authorized agent's own signature. If the ballot is to be mailed to the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

applicant, the applicant shall list the bona fide personal mailing address of the applicant in the appropriate space on the application.

(2) A municipal clerk may transmit an application to a person under this subsection by facsimile machine or other electronic means, if so requested by the applicant. If a municipal clerk has a facsimile machine or other electronic means, an applicant may return a completed application to the clerk by such a machine or device, provided the applicant shall also mail the original of the completed application to the clerk, either separately or with the absentee ballot that is issued to the applicant. If the clerk does not receive such original application by the close of the polls on the day of the election, primary or referendum, the absentee ballot shall not be counted.

(3) No municipal clerk shall provide, for an election, primary or referendum, five or more absentee ballot applications to any person earlier than ninety days prior to the first day of issuance of absentee voting sets, as provided in subsection (f) of this section, for such election, primary or referendum.

(4) No municipal clerk shall provide or accept for return, and no person shall [distribute or otherwise] use, any absentee ballot application in a given year unless such application contains the notation described in subdivision (3) of subsection (b) of section 9-139a, as amended by this act, authorizing such application's use in such year.

(b) On and after July 1, 2021:

(1) Application for an absentee ballot may also be made to the Secretary of the State through an online system established and maintained by the Secretary for such purpose if an applicant's signature is in a database described in subsection (b) of section 9-19k, or the system described in section 9-4c, and such signature may be imported into such online application system.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(2) In order for an application for an absentee ballot to be submitted through the online system described in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the applicant's signature shall be obtained from a database described in subsection (b) of section 9-19k, or the system described in section 9-4c, and the applicant shall, on an online form prescribed by the Secretary, (A) type [his or her] such applicant's name, (B) indicate the municipality in which such applicant is eligible to vote or has applied for such eligibility, and (C) mark a box associated with the following statement:

"By clicking on the box below, I swear or affirm all of the following under penalty of false statement in absentee balloting:

1. I am the person whose name is provided on this form, and I desire to apply for an absentee ballot.

2. I am eligible to vote in the municipality provided on this form or have applied for such eligibility.

3. I authorize the Department of Motor Vehicles or other Connecticut state agency to transmit to the Connecticut Secretary of the State my signature that is on file with such agency and understand that such signature will be used by the Secretary on this online application for an absentee ballot as if I had signed this form personally."

(3) Not later than twenty-four hours after receipt of any submitted application for an absentee ballot through the online system described in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Secretary shall transmit such application to the clerk of the municipality indicated in such application.

(c) The municipal clerk shall check the name of each absentee ballot applicant against the last-completed registry list and any updated registry lists on file in the municipal clerk's office. If the name of such applicant does not appear on any of such lists, the clerk shall send such applicant a notice, in a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State, to

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

the effect that (1) the applicant's name did not appear on the list of electors of the municipality at the time the application was processed, and (2) unless the applicant is admitted or restored as an elector of the municipality by the applicable cutoff dates, an absentee ballot will not be mailed to [him] such applicant. Such notice shall not be so mailed if, prior to the mailing of the notice, the registrars provide the clerk with reliable information showing the absentee ballot applicant to be an elector of the municipality.

(d) (1) An absentee voting set shall consist of (A) the mailing envelope containing all other items of such set and used to issue such set to the applicant, (B) an absentee ballot, [inner and outer envelopes] (C) a privacy sleeve for the ballot, (D) an envelope for [its return] returning the ballot with the privacy sleeve, (E) instructions for [its use] using the ballot and privacy sleeve, and (F) if applicable, explanatory texts concerning ballot questions, as provided for in sections 2-30a and 9-369b, as amended by this act.

(2) No other material shall be included with an absentee voting set issued to an applicant, except (A) as provided in sections 9-153e, as amended by this act, and 9-153f, as amended by this act, [or] (B) where necessary to correct an error or omission as provided in section 9-153c, as amended by this act, or (C) any voting information as may be prescribed by the Secretary of the State, provided no such voting information shall promote the success or defeat of any candidate or question.

(e) Upon receipt of an application, the municipal clerk shall, unless a notice is mailed to the applicant pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, [write the serial number of the outer] ensure the unique ballot identification number appearing on the return envelope included in the absentee voting set to be issued to the applicant matches the unique identification number displayed on the application form in the space provided for [that purpose on the application form. Sets shall be issued

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

to applicants in consecutive ascending numerical order of the envelope serial numbers, and] such purpose. As absentee voting sets are issued to applicants, the clerk shall keep a list of the unique ballot identification numbers [indicating beside each number] and shall indicate beside each unique ballot identification number on the list the name of the applicant to whom [that set] the absentee voting set corresponding with such unique ballot identification number was issued. The list shall be preserved as a public record as required by section 9-150b, as amended by this act.

(f) Absentee voting sets shall be issued beginning on the thirty-first day before an election and the twenty-first day before a primary or, if such day is a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, beginning on the next preceding business day.

(g) (1) On the first day of issuance of absentee voting sets, the municipal clerk shall mail an absentee voting set to each applicant whose application was received by the clerk prior to that day. When the clerk receives an application during the time period in which absentee voting sets are to be issued, [he] the clerk shall mail an absentee voting set to the applicant [,] within twenty-four hours, unless the applicant submits [his] such applicant's application in person at the office of the clerk and [asks] requests to be given [his] such applicant's absentee voting set immediately, in which case the clerk shall comply with the request. Any absentee voting set to be mailed to an applicant shall be mailed to the bona fide personal mailing address shown on the application. If an applicant has provided a mailing address at a Department of Correction facility and such applicant is subsequently transferred to another Department of Correction facility, the Commissioner of Correction shall ensure delivery of the absentee voting set to such applicant. Issuance of absentee voting sets shall also be subject to the provisions of subsection (c) of this section, section 9-150c [and section 9-159q] concerning persons designated to deliver or return

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

ballots in cases involving unforeseen illness or disability and section 9-159q, as amended by this act, concerning supervised voting at certain health care institutions.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, upon receipt of an application under section 9-140e, 9-153e, as amended by this act, 9-153f, as amended by this act, or 9-158c, the municipal clerk may issue to the applicant an absentee ballot by electronic means if such applicant requests such manner of issuance.

(h) No absentee ballot shall be issued on the day of an election or primary, or after the opening of the polls on the day of a referendum, except in cases involving unforeseen illness or disability [or presidential or overseas ballots] as provided in section 9-150c and presidential or overseas ballots as provided in sections 9-158a to 9-158m, inclusive.

(i) The municipal clerk shall file executed applications in alphabetical order according to the applicants' surnames. Such applications shall be preserved as a public record as required by section 9-150b, as amended by this act.

(j) No person shall pay or give any compensation to another, and no person shall accept any compensation, solely for (1) distributing absentee ballot applications obtained from a municipal clerk or the Secretary of the State, or (2) assisting any other person in the execution of an absentee ballot.

(k) (1) A person shall register with the municipal clerk before distributing five or more absentee ballot applications for an election, primary or referendum, not including applications distributed to such person's immediate family. Such requirement shall not apply to a person who is the designee of an applicant or to any employee of the Department of Correction who provides the application for absentee ballot form prescribed under subsection (c) of section 9-139a, as

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

amended by this act, to one or more incarcerated absentee ballot applicants.

(2) The municipal clerk shall reject the application of any absentee ballot applicant made upon the form prescribed under subsection (c) of section 9-139a, as amended by this act, if such form indicates any address other than an address at a Department of Correction facility. The municipal clerk shall maintain a log of all applications of incarcerated absentee ballot applicants received by such municipal clerk, which log shall indicate the name and address of each applicant, the date of receipt of each application and the date such municipal clerk mailed the absentee ballot to such applicant or the reason why such application was rejected.

(3) Any person who distributes absentee ballot applications shall maintain a list of the names and addresses of prospective absentee ballot applicants who receive such applications, and shall file such list with the municipal clerk prior to the date of the primary, election or referendum for which the applications were so distributed, except that such requirements shall not apply to any employee of the Department of Correction who provides the application for absentee ballot form prescribed under subsection (c) of section 9-139a, as amended by this act, to incarcerated absentee ballot applicants. Any person who distributes absentee ballot applications and receives an executed application shall forthwith file the application with the municipal clerk.

(l) No candidate, party or political committee, or agent of such candidate or committee shall mail unsolicited applications for absentee ballots to any person, unless such [mailing includes] committee or agent includes with such mailing: (1) A written [explanation of the eligibility requirements for voting by absentee ballot as prescribed in subsection (a) of section 9-135] disclaimer that such mailing was (A) paid for by such committee or agent, and (B) in the case of a candidate committee, approved by the applicable candidate, and (2) a written [warning that

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

voting or attempting to vote by absentee ballot without meeting one or more of such eligibility requirements subjects the elector or applicant to potential civil and criminal penalties] explanation of the various ways an absentee ballot may be returned, as provided in subsection (a) of section 9-140b, as amended by this act. As used in this subsection, "agent" means any person authorized to act on behalf of another person.

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

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

(o) As used in this section, (1) "immediate family" has the same meaning as provided in subsection (a) of section 9-140b, as amended by this act, and (2) "designee" has the same meaning as provided in subsection (b) of section 9-140b, as amended by this act.

Sec. 5. Section 9-140a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Each absentee ballot applicant shall sign the form on the [inner] return envelope provided for in section 9-137, as amended by this act, which shall constitute a statement under the penalties of false statement

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

in absentee balloting. Any absentee ballot applicant who is unable to write may cause [his] such applicant's name to be signed on the form by an authorized agent who shall, in the space provided for the signature, write the name of the applicant followed by the word "by" and [his] such authorized agent's own signature. The failure of the applicant or authorized agent to date the form shall not invalidate the ballot. The ballot shall be inserted in the [inner envelope, and the inner envelope shall be inserted in the outer] return envelope [,] prior to the return of the ballot to the municipal clerk. If an applicant is required to return identification with the ballot pursuant to the Help America Vote Act, P.L. 107-252, as amended from time to time, the municipal clerk shall provide to the applicant an additional envelope preaddressed to the municipal clerk for the return of such applicant's identification, which envelope may be postage prepaid, and the applicant shall return such identification [shall be inserted in the outer envelope so such identification can be viewed without opening the inner envelope] to the municipal clerk in such additional envelope.

Sec. 6. Section 9-140b of the general statutes, as amended by section 88 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) An absentee ballot shall be cast at a primary, election or referendum only if: (1) [It] Such ballot is mailed by (A) the ballot applicant, (B) a designee of a person who applies for an absentee ballot because of illness or physical disability, or (C) a member of the immediate family of an applicant who is a student, so that [it] the ballot is received by the clerk of the municipality in which the applicant is qualified to vote not later than the close of the polls; (2) [it] such ballot is returned by the applicant in person to [the] such clerk by the day before the election or primary or prior to the opening of the polls on the day of the referendum; (3) [it] such ballot is returned by a designee of an ill or physically disabled ballot applicant, in person, to [said] such

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

clerk not later than the close of the polls on the day of the election, primary or referendum; (4) [it] such ballot is returned by a member of the immediate family of the [absentee voter] applicant, in person, to [said] such clerk not later than the close of the polls on the day of the election, primary or referendum; (5) in the case of a presidential or overseas ballot, [it] such ballot is mailed or otherwise returned pursuant to the provisions of section 9-158g, as amended by this act; or (6) [it] such ballot is returned with the proper identification as required by the Help America Vote Act, P.L. 107-252, as amended from time to time, if applicable, [inserted in the outer envelope so such identification can be viewed without opening the inner envelope] in accordance with the provisions of section 9-140a, as amended by this act. A person returning an absentee ballot to the municipal clerk pursuant to subdivision (3) or (4) of this subsection shall present identification and, on the [outer] return envelope of the absentee ballot, sign [his] such person's name in the presence of the municipal clerk [,] and indicate [his] such person's address [, his] and relationship to the voter or [his] position [,] and the date and time of such return. An absentee ballot shall be deemed cast when it is received and accepted by the municipal clerk in accordance with the provisions of this subsection, provided the statement on the return envelope for such absentee ballot is signed by the applicant. As used in this section, "immediate family" means a dependent relative who resides in the individual's household or any spouse, child, parent or sibling of the individual.

(b) As used in this section and section 9-150c, "designee" means (1) a person who is caring for the applicant because of the applicant's illness or physical disability, including, but not limited to, a licensed physician or a registered or practical nurse, (2) a member of the applicant's family, who is designated by an absentee ballot applicant and who consents to such designation, or (3) a police officer, registrar of voters, deputy registrar of voters or assistant registrar of voters in the municipality in which the applicant resides.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(c) (1) For purposes of this section, "mailed" means (A) sent by the United States Postal Service or any commercial carrier, courier or messenger service recognized and approved by the Secretary of the State, or (B) deposited in a secure drop box designated by the municipal clerk for such purpose, in accordance with instructions prescribed by the Secretary.

(2) (A) In the case of absentee ballots mailed under subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of this subsection, beginning on the first day of issuance of absentee voting sets, as provided in subsection (f) of section 9-140, as amended by this act, and on each [weekday] business day thereafter until the close of the polls at the election, primary or referendum, including at the close of the polls at such election, primary or referendum, the municipal clerk shall retrieve from the secure drop box described in said subparagraph each such ballot deposited in such drop box.

(B) On and after July 1, 2025, each municipality shall provide a video recording device for each secure drop box described in subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of this subsection within such municipality, which device's recordings shall capture the location of such drop box and evidence the date and time of each such recording beginning on the first day of issuance of absentee voting sets, as provided in subsection (f) of section 9-140, as amended by this act, and until the last retrieval of absentee ballots from such drop box at the close of the polls at the election or primary. Each such recording shall, as soon as practicable, be made publicly available from the date of recording, but in no case later than five days after such last retrieval. Each such recording shall be retained by the municipality for a period of twelve months and may be destroyed at the end of such period, except that the State Elections Enforcement Commission or a court of competent jurisdiction may order that such period be extended until the conclusion of any investigation related to such recording.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(3) The Secretary of the State may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, concerning the use of secure drop boxes for the deposit of absentee ballots, including, but not limited to, the placement and positioning of any such drop box and the video recording of any such drop box and retention of any such recording.

(d) No person shall have in [his] such person's possession any official absentee ballot or ballot envelope for use at any primary, election or referendum except the applicant to whom it was issued, the Secretary of the State or [his or her] the Secretary's authorized agents, any official printer of absentee ballot forms and [his] such printer's designated carriers, the United States Postal Service, any other carrier, courier or messenger service recognized and approved by the Secretary of the State, any person authorized by a municipal clerk to receive and process official absentee ballot forms on behalf of the municipal clerk, any authorized primary, election or referendum official or any other person authorized by any provision of the general statutes to possess a ballot or ballot envelope.

(e) No (1) candidate, or (2) agent of a candidate, political party or committee, as defined in section 9-601, shall knowingly be present when an absentee ballot applicant executes an absentee ballot, except when (A) [when] the candidate or agent is (i) a member of the immediate family of the applicant, or (ii) authorized by law to be present, or (B) [when] the absentee ballot is executed in the office of the municipal clerk and the municipal clerk or an employee of the municipal clerk is a candidate or agent.

Sec. 7. Section 9-140c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) (1) The municipal clerk shall retain the return envelopes containing absentee ballots received by [him] such clerk under section 9-140b, as amended by this act, and shall not open such return

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

envelopes. [The] As the municipal clerk receives each absentee ballot, such clerk shall first make a record, for the purposes of subdivision (3) of this subsection, of each return envelope on which the applicant did not sign the statement and shall then endorse over [his] such clerk's signature [,] upon each [outer] return envelope [as he receives it,] (A) the date and precise time of its receipt, and (B) the method of its receipt, in accordance with the provisions of subdivision (2) of this subsection. The clerk shall make an affidavit attesting to the accuracy of all such endorsements [, and at the close of the polls] and shall deliver such affidavit at the close of the polls to the head moderator, who shall endorse the time of its receipt and return it to the clerk after all counting is complete. The clerk shall preserve the affidavit for one hundred eighty days in accordance with the requirements of section 9-150b, as amended by this act. The clerk shall keep a list of the names of the applicants who return absentee ballots to the clerk under section 9-140b, as amended by this act. The list shall be preserved as a public record as required by section 9-150b, as amended by this act.

(2) The municipal clerk shall record on the [outer] return envelope of each absentee ballot [returned] received by such clerk under section 9-140b, as amended by this act, whether such absentee ballot was (A) sent by the United States Postal Service or any commercial carrier, courier or messenger service, (B) deposited in a secure drop box, in which case the location of such drop box shall also be so recorded, (C) returned in person by an elector, or (D) returned in person by the designee or immediate family member of an elector. As soon as reasonably practicable after the close of the polls at an election or primary, the municipal clerk shall submit to the Secretary of the State a report detailing the total count of all absentee ballots returned for such election or primary, broken down by each method described in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of this subdivision.

(3) (A) If the municipal clerk receives an absentee ballot without the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

statement on the return envelope signed by the applicant, such absentee ballot may be cured in person at the municipal clerk's office beginning on the first day of issuance of absentee voting sets, as provided in subsection (f) of section 9-140, as amended by this act, and until the close of the polls on the day of the election, primary or referendum. After such close of the polls, no such absentee ballot may be cured.

(B) In the case of any absentee ballot described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, the municipal clerk shall use best efforts to contact the affected voter as soon as possible, but in no case later than twenty-four hours after receiving the absentee ballot, for the purpose of curing such ballot pursuant to said subparagraph. During the period beginning twenty-four hours prior to the closing of the polls and until such closing of the polls, the municipal clerk shall use best efforts to contact the affected voter for such purpose immediately upon receiving the absentee ballot. The municipal clerk's best efforts shall include, but need not be limited to, contacting the affected voter by (i) calling the telephone number or numbers listed on the voter's absentee ballot application and voter registration, if the voter has provided any, and (ii) sending an electronic mail to the electronic mail address listed on the voter's absentee ballot application and voter registration, if the voter has provided any. If the voter has provided neither a telephone number nor an electronic mail address, the municipal clerk shall exercise discretion in attempting to contact the voter by other means.

(b) (1) Beginning [not earlier than the seventh day before the election, primary or referendum] the day after the first day of issuance of absentee voting sets, as provided in subsection (f) of section 9-140, as amended by this act, and on any weekday thereafter, all absentee ballots received by the municipal clerk at or prior to eleven o'clock a.m. of [such day] the day of the election, primary or referendum may be sorted into voting districts by the municipal clerk and checked as provided in this subsection. On any such day, beginning as soon as the ballots have been

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

sorted, the registrars of voters, without opening the [outer] return envelopes, may check the names of the applicants returning ballots on the official checklist to be used at the election, primary or referendum by indicating "absentee" or "A" preceding each such name and, if unaffiliated electors are authorized under section 9-431 to vote in the primary of either of two parties, the designation of the party in which the applicants are voting preceding each such name. Unless absentee ballots are to be counted in the respective polling places, pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-147a, the registrars shall also place such indication on a duplicate checklist to be retained by the municipal clerk until the municipal clerk delivers such duplicate checklist to the registrars, in accordance with subsection (e) of this section, for the use of the absentee ballot counters pursuant to subsection (i) of this section.

(2) All absentee ballots received at or prior to eleven o'clock a.m. of the last day before the election, primary or referendum which is not a Sunday or legal holiday, shall be sorted into voting districts by the municipal clerk and checked as provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection not later than such last day.

(c) If the name of the applicant returning the ballot is not on the official checklist for any polling place in such municipality, the registrars shall endorse on the face of [such outer] the return envelope the word "rejected", followed by a statement of the reasons for rejection, and [the outer] such return envelope shall not be opened [or the ballot] nor shall such ballot be counted.

(d) After such checking has been completed on any such day, the municipal clerk shall seal the unopened ballots in a package and retain them in a safe place.

(e) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, ballots received at or prior to eleven o'clock a.m. on the last day before the election, primary or referendum shall be delivered by the municipal

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

clerk to the registrars [between ten o'clock a.m. and twelve o'clock noon] not later than eight o'clock a.m. on the day of the election, [or] primary [and at twelve o'clock noon on the day of a] or referendum. Unless absentee ballots are to be counted in the respective polling places, pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-147a, the municipal clerk shall also deliver to the registrars at this time the duplicate checklist provided for in subsection (b) of this section, for the use of the absentee ballot counters pursuant to subsection (i) of this section.

(2) [The] In the case of a special election or referendum, the municipal clerk may deliver [the] such ballots at a time that is later than [the time provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection] eight o'clock a.m. on the day of such special election or referendum, provided such time is mutually agreed upon by the municipal clerk and registrars and is not later than [eight] four o'clock p.m. on the day of [the election, primary] such special election or referendum.

(f) Absentee ballots timely received by the municipal clerk after eleven o'clock a.m. of such last day before an election, primary or referendum shall be sorted into voting districts by the clerk and retained by the clerk separately until delivered to the registrars of voters for checking.

(g) Any or all of such ballots received after eleven o'clock a.m. of such last day before an election, primary or referendum and before six o'clock p.m. on the day of the election, primary or referendum shall, upon request of the registrars, be delivered to the registrars by the municipal clerk at six o'clock p.m. on the day of the election, primary or referendum for checking, or at a later time mutually agreed upon by the clerk and registrars, provided such time is not later than eight o'clock p.m. on the day of the election, primary or referendum.

(h) Absentee ballots received after six o'clock p.m. on the day of the election, primary or referendum and any ballots received prior to six

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

o'clock p.m. of such day which were not delivered earlier shall be delivered to the registrars at the close of the polls for checking. Although absentee ballots shall be checked by the registrars [of voters] at various times throughout the election, primary or referendum day, absentee ballots may be counted at one single time during such day.

(i) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the absentee ballot counters, upon receipt of the ballots delivered by the municipal clerk to the registrars at six o'clock p.m. on the day of the election, primary or referendum and at the close of the polls pursuant to subsections (g) and (h) of this section, shall check the names of the applicants returning ballots on the duplicate checklist in the same manner as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section.

(2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, the names of applicants whose ballots were delivered at six o'clock p.m. on the day of the election, primary or referendum shall be called in to the appropriate polling places where they shall be checked by the checkers on the official checklists, and they shall also be checked by the absentee ballot counters on the duplicate checklist required under subsection (b) of this section.

(B) Whenever absentee ballots are counted in any polling place pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-147a, the names of applicants whose ballots were delivered at six o'clock p.m. on the day of the election, primary or referendum shall be checked by the absentee ballot counters and checkers at such polling place on the official checklist used at such polling place.

(3) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, the names of applicants whose ballots were delivered at the close of the polls shall be checked by the absentee ballot counters on the official checklists used at the polling places and such official checklists, bearing the certifications required by section 9-307, shall be delivered by the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

registrars or assistant registrars to the central counting moderator for that purpose.

(B) Whenever absentee ballots are counted in any polling place pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-147a, the official checklist used at such polling place shall remain in such polling place for checking by the absentee ballot counters at such polling place.

(4) If the name of an applicant returning a ballot has been checked on the official checklist as having voted in person, the absentee ballot counters shall, in checking the ballots, endorse on the face of the [outer] return envelope the word "rejected" followed by a statement of the reason for rejection, and [the outer] such return envelope shall not be opened [or the ballot] nor shall such ballot be counted.

(5) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, when central counting is completed and the result is announced, the central counting moderator shall deliver the duplicate checklist, the official checklists and the returns required by section 9-150b, as amended by this act, to the head moderator.

(B) Whenever absentee ballots are counted in any polling place pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-147a, and such counting is completed and the result for such polling place is announced, the moderator for such polling place shall deliver the official checklist used at such polling place and the return required by section 9-150b, as amended by this act, to the head moderator.

(j) Each time absentee ballots are delivered by the clerk to the registrars pursuant to this section, the clerk and registrars shall execute an affidavit of delivery and receipt stating the number of ballots delivered. The clerk shall preserve the affidavit for the period prescribed in section 9-150b, as amended by this act.

(k) The absentee ballot counters shall count, in the manner provided

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

in section 9-150a, as amended by this act, each group of absentee ballots upon receipt from the registrars.

(l) The municipal clerk shall retain all [outer] return envelopes containing absentee ballots received by [him] such clerk after the close of the polls, unopened, for the period prescribed in section 9-150b, as amended by this act.

Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The office of the Secretary of the State shall develop and install integrated ballot-tracking software with the state-wide centralized voter registration system described in section 9-50b of the general statutes, for use by electors who vote by absentee ballot. Such software shall, at a minimum, permit the elector to track (1) when the municipal clerk has received and accepted the elector's absentee ballot application, (2) when the municipal clerk's office has mailed the absentee ballot set to the elector, (3) when the absentee ballot set has been delivered to the elector, (4) when the absentee ballot being returned by the elector has been delivered to the municipal clerk, and (5) whether the elector's returned absentee ballot has been accepted, requires curing pursuant to subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 9-140c of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or has been rejected.

Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) Any elector may submit a request, in a form and manner prescribed by the Secretary of the State, to the registrars of voters of the municipality of such elector's voting residence to automatically receive an application for an absentee ballot for each election and referendum, and primary if applicable, conducted in such municipality. Each elector whose request is approved shall be issued an absentee ballot application, as soon as practicable, in advance of each such election, primary or referendum for which such elector is eligible to vote. Such elector's automatic absentee ballot application status shall remain in effect until such elector: (1) Is removed from the official registry list of the municipality, (2) is removed from automatic

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

absentee ballot application status in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, or (3) requests in writing to the registrar of voters that such elector no longer receive such automatic absentee ballot application status.

(b) An elector approved for automatic absentee ballot application status shall be removed from such status whenever (1) such elector's absentee ballot application is returned as undeliverable, (2) such elector submits a change of address form for a move outside the state with the National Change of Address System of the United States Postal Service, (3) a registrar of voters of the municipality in which such elector previously resided receives information or data, used to maintain the state-wide centralized voter registration system under section 9-50c of the general statutes, that such elector has moved outside the state, (4) the Secretary of the State or a registrar of voters of the municipality in which such elector previously resided receives information under section 9-21 of the general statutes that such elector has registered to vote outside the state, or (5) such elector's name is placed on the inactive registry list compiled under section 9-35 of the general statutes.

Sec. 10. Section 9-150a of the general statutes, as amended by section 90 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) [The] Not later than fifteen minutes prior to the time specified or agreed to, as applicable, under subsection (e) of section 9-140c, as amended by this act, the absentee ballot counters shall proceed to the central counting location or to the respective polling places when counting is to take place pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-147a. [at the times designated by the registrars of voters.]

(b) At the time each group of ballots is delivered to them pursuant to section 9-140c, as amended by this act, the counters shall perform any checking of such ballots required by subsection (i) of said section and

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

shall then proceed as hereinafter provided.

(c) Except with respect to ballots marked "Rejected" pursuant to section 9-140c, as amended by this act, or other applicable law, the counters shall remove the [inner envelopes] absentee ballots from the [outer] return envelopes, shall note the total number of absentee ballots received and shall report such total to the moderator. They shall similarly note and separately so report the total numbers of presidential ballots and overseas ballots received pursuant to sections 9-158a to 9-158m, inclusive.

(d) (1) (A) If the statement on the [inner] return envelope has not been signed as required by section 9-140a, as amended by this act, such [inner] return envelope shall not be opened [or] nor shall the ballot be removed therefrom. [, and such inner envelope shall be replaced in the opened outer envelope which shall be marked "Rejected" and the reason therefor endorsed thereon by the counters.] The return envelope shall be marked "Rejected" and the reason for such rejection shall be endorsed on such return envelope by the counters.

(B) The moderator shall maintain a log of each absentee ballot applicant whose ballot was marked "Rejected" under subparagraph (A) of this subdivision and include thereon for each such applicant the reason for the rejection. The moderator shall transmit such log to the Secretary of the State at the same time and in the same manner as the duplicate list to be transmitted to the Secretary by electronic means in accordance with section 9-314.

(2) (A) If such statement is signed but the individual completing the ballot is an individual described in subsection (a) of section 9-23r and has not met the requirements of subsection (e) of section 9-23r, as amended by this act, the counters shall replace the ballot in the opened [inner envelope, replace the inner envelope in the opened outer] return envelope and shall mark "Rejected as an Absentee Ballot" and endorse

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

the reason for such rejection on [the outer] such return envelope, and the ballot shall be treated as a provisional ballot for federal offices only, pursuant to sections 9-232i to 9-232o, inclusive.

(B) The moderator shall maintain a log of each absentee ballot applicant whose ballot was marked "Rejected as an Absentee Ballot" under subparagraph (A) of this subdivision and include thereon for each such applicant the reason for the rejection. The moderator shall transmit such log to the Secretary of the State at the same time and in the same manner as the duplicate list to be transmitted to the Secretary by electronic means in accordance with section 9-314.

[(e) The counters shall then remove the absentee ballots from the remaining inner envelopes.]

[(f)] (e) Before the ballots are counted, all opened [outer and inner] envelopes from which such ballots have been removed, and all [outer] envelopes marked "Rejected" as required by law, shall be placed and sealed by the counters, separately by voting district, in depository envelopes prescribed by the Secretary of the State and provided by the municipal clerk. The counters shall seal such depository envelopes by wrapping them lengthwise and sideways with nonreusable tape, endorse on each such envelope their names, the voting district and the time of the count, and deliver such envelopes to the moderator.

[(g)] (f) The counters shall then count such ballots as provided in this section. The moderator shall supervise the counting.

[(h)] (g) The Secretary of the State shall provide a procedure manual for counting absentee ballots. The manual shall include a description of the steps to be followed in receiving, handling, counting and preserving absentee ballots. Facsimile ballots shall be printed in the manual, illustrating potential variations in ballot markings along with the correct interpretation to be given in each situation illustrated.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

[(i)] (h) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section the provisions of section 9-265 shall apply to write-in votes on absentee ballots at elections.

(2) Votes cast by absentee ballot at a primary may be counted only for candidates whose names appear on the ballot on primary day, and no write-in vote shall be counted except as provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection.

(3) If a write-in vote on an absentee ballot is cast for a candidate for any office whose name appears on the ballot for that office on election or primary day, such candidate's name shall be deemed to have been checked on such ballot and, except as otherwise provided in subsection [(j)] (i) of this section, one vote shall be counted and recorded for such candidate for such office.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in section 9-265, if the name of a registered write-in candidate for an office is written in for such office on an absentee ballot it shall be deemed validly written in for purposes of subsection [(j)] (i) of this section.

[(j)] (i) In the counting of absentee ballots the intent of the voter shall govern, provided the following conclusive presumptions, where applicable, shall prevail in determining such intent:

(1) If the names of more candidates for an office than the voter is entitled to vote for are checked or validly written in, then the vote cast for that office shall be deemed an invalid overvote.

(2) If the name of a candidate who has vacated [his] such candidate's candidacy is checked, such vote shall not be counted.

(3) On an absentee ballot on which candidates' names are printed, a vote shall be deemed cast only for each candidate whose name is individually checked or validly written in, except as otherwise provided

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

in this subsection. If a party designation is circled, checked, underscored or similarly marked in any manner, or written in, no vote shall be deemed cast or cancelled for any candidate by virtue of such marking or writing.

[(k)] (j) If the intent of an absentee voter is difficult to ascertain due to uncertain, conflicting or incorrect ballot markings which are not clearly addressed in this section or in the procedure manual for counting absentee ballots provided by the Secretary of the State, the absentee ballot counters shall submit the ballot and their question to the moderator. They shall then count the ballot in accordance with the moderator's decision as to the voter's intent, if such intent is ascertainable. A ballot or part of a ballot on which the intent is determined by the moderator to be not ascertainable, shall not be counted. The moderator shall endorse on the ballot the question and [his] such moderator's decision.

[(l)] (k) No absentee ballot shall be rejected as a marked ballot unless, in the opinion of the moderator, it was marked for the purpose of providing a means of identifying the voter who cast it.

[(m)] (l) After the absentee ballots have been so counted they shall be placed by the counters, separately by voting district, in depository envelopes prescribed by the Secretary of the State and provided by the municipal clerk. Any notes, worksheets, or other written materials used by the counters in counting such ballots shall be endorsed by them with their names, the date and the time of the count and shall also be placed in such depository envelopes together with the ballots, and with the separate record of the number of votes cast on such ballots for each candidate as required by section 9-150b, as amended by this act. Such depository envelopes shall then be sealed, endorsed and delivered to the moderator by the counters in the same manner as provided in subsection [(f)] (e) of this section.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

Sec. 11. Subsections (e) to (i), inclusive, of section 9-150b of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(e) The sealed depository envelopes required by subsections [(f) and (m)] (e) and (l) of section 9-150a, as amended by this act, shall be returned by the moderator to the municipal clerk as soon as practicable on or before the day following the election, primary or referendum.

(f) The municipal clerk shall preserve for sixty days after the election, primary or referendum the depository envelopes containing opened envelopes and rejected ballots required by subsection [(f)] (e) of section 9-150a, as amended by this act, and shall so preserve for one hundred eighty days the depository envelopes containing counted ballots and related materials required by subsection [(m)] (l) of section 9-150a, as amended by this act.

(g) No such depository envelope shall be opened except by order of a court of competent jurisdiction, by the State Elections Enforcement Commission pursuant to a subpoena issued under subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-7b, as amended by this act, or within five business days after an election, primary or referendum for the purpose of a recanvass conducted pursuant to law. After such a recanvass the depository envelopes and their contents shall be returned to the municipal clerk and preserved for the stated period.

(h) For sixty days after the election, primary or referendum the following shall be preserved by the municipal clerk as a public record open to public inspection: (1) All executed absentee ballot application forms and direction by registrar forms, as required by subsection (i) of section 9-140, as amended by this act; (2) the list and index of applicants for presidential or overseas ballots as required by section 9-158h, as amended by this act; (3) the [numerical] list of unique ballot identification numbers corresponding to absentee voting sets issued as

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

required by subsection (e) of section 9-140, as amended by this act; (4) the list of the names of persons whose absentee ballots are received by the municipal clerk, as required by subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-140c, as amended by this act; (5) all unused absentee ballots; and (6) all envelopes containing ballots received by the municipal clerk after the close of the polls, which shall remain unopened.

(i) For one hundred eighty days after the election, primary or referendum the following shall be preserved by the municipal clerk as a public record open to public inspection: (1) The affidavit regarding the municipal clerk's endorsement of [inner] return envelopes, as required by subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-140c, as amended by this act; and (2) the affidavit regarding delivery and receipt of ballots, as required by subsection (j) of [said] section 9-140c, as amended by this act.

Sec. 12. Section 9-153b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) If any absentee ballot applicant applies for an additional absentee ballot, such applicant shall note on the application the reason for applying for an additional absentee ballot and shall return the absentee voting set formerly issued to such applicant before another set is issued, provided, if such applicant is unable to return such formerly issued set, such application for an additional ballot shall be accompanied by a statement signed under the penalties of false statement in absentee balloting in which such applicant shall note the reason for such applicant's inability to return such formerly issued set. If such applicant fails to file such a statement, no additional set shall be issued to such applicant. An application for an additional absentee ballot shall only be made by an absentee ballot applicant. Any additional absentee voting set issued under this subsection shall only be either provided in person to the applicant or mailed directly to the applicant at the bona fide mailing address designated by such applicant.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(b) For all absentee voting sets or portions thereof returned under subsection (a) of this section, the municipal clerk shall mark the [serially-numbered outer] return envelope "rejected" and note the reasons for rejection on all absentee ballots and envelopes so returned and shall seal all such absentee voting sets or portions thereof in a package and retain them in a safe place until delivered in accordance with section 9-140c, as amended by this act. The municipal clerk shall keep a list of the names of each absentee ballot applicant who has applied for more than one absentee ballot, as provided in section 9-140, as amended by this act, together with the [serial] unique ballot identification number appearing on the [outer] return envelope of each absentee voting set issued to each such applicant.

(c) If more than one absentee ballot is received from any elector, the ballot of such elector last received by the municipal clerk shall be counted if no absentee ballot of such elector has already been counted. For all absentee ballots of such elector that are not counted, the municipal clerk shall mark the [serially-numbered outer] return envelopes "rejected" and note the reasons for rejection and shall deliver such ballots in accordance with section 9-140c, as amended by this act.

Sec. 13. Section 9-153c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) If a municipal clerk has omitted the name of a candidate, party or office designation, inserted an incorrect or misspelled name of a candidate, party or office designation, provided an absentee ballot applicant with a ballot which is not the correct ballot for [his] such applicant's voting district, or incorrectly imprinted or failed to imprint the designation of a state or local question on an absentee ballot in the appropriate space, and if any such omission or error is likely to mislead any voter, [he] the clerk shall, as soon as [he] such clerk becomes aware of such omission or error, promptly mail to each applicant to whom such an absentee ballot has been issued, a correct absentee ballot, the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

necessary envelopes for its return and instructions, a statement explaining the error or omission including the correct name or question and a copy of this section. The municipal clerk shall inform the Secretary of the State when [he] such clerk proceeds under this subsection.

(b) Any additional absentee voting sets issued to applicants under this section shall be issued [in consecutive ascending numerical order based upon the serial number appearing on the outer] bearing a unique ballot identification number on the envelope for return of ballots to the municipal clerk, and the clerk shall keep a record of such unique ballot identification numbers by making a notation on, or attaching a memorandum to, the applicant's original application for an absentee ballot.

(c) The municipal clerk shall keep a list containing the name, address and voting district of each absentee ballot applicant who has been issued more than one absentee ballot under this section and the [serial] unique ballot identification number appearing on the [outer] return envelope of each absentee voting set so issued. The list shall be kept with the list required under section 9-140, as amended by this act.

(d) If more than one ballot is received from an applicant who has been sent a correct ballot under subsection (a) of this section, the ballot last received by the municipal clerk shall be counted if no ballot of such applicant has already been counted. For all ballots of such applicant that are not counted, the municipal clerk shall inscribe the word "rejected" and note the reasons for rejection on the [outer] return envelope and shall seal them, unopened, in a package and retain them in a safe place until delivered in accordance with section 9-140c, as amended by this act.

Sec. 14. Section 9-153e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

A member of the armed forces who is an elector or an applicant for admission as an elector, or the member's spouse or dependent if living where such member is stationed, may apply before a regular election for a blank absentee ballot to vote for all offices being contested at the election. The municipal clerk shall make such ballots available for this purpose beginning not earlier than ninety days before the election. Application shall be made upon a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State or on the federal postcard application form provided pursuant to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, 100 Stat. 924, 42 USC 1973ff et seq., as amended from time to time, or any other applicable law and shall be issued only if the applicant states that due to military contingencies the regular application procedure, as set forth in section 9-140, as amended by this act, cannot be followed. Upon receipt of the application, the municipal clerk shall issue [the ballot] in the manner requested by the elector, either by mail or by electronic means, [as requested by the elector,] the ballot which shall be prescribed and provided by the Secretary of the State [,] and a list of the offices to be voted upon indicating the number of individuals for which each elector may vote. As soon as a complete list of nominated candidates, including the party designations of such candidates, and questions is available, the municipal clerk shall send such list to each applicant. If the list of candidates and questions is not available when the ballot is issued, the municipal clerk shall include a statement indicating that such list shall be [mailed] sent as soon as it becomes available. The ballot shall permit the elector to vote by writing in the names of specific candidates and offices for which [he] such elector is voting. The elector may also vote on the questions in a manner prescribed by the Secretary of the State. If such ballot is issued by electronic means, the municipal clerk at the time of such issuance shall include a certification, prescribed by the Secretary of the State, [that] which the elector shall be required to complete, sign and return with the completed ballot in order for such ballot to be counted. If the military contingency no longer exists, application for an additional ballot for all offices may be made pursuant

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

to the provisions of section 9-153b, as amended by this act.

Sec. 15. Section 9-153f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-140, as amended by this act, any elector who is living, or expects to be living or traveling before and on [election] the day of an election or primary, outside the territorial limits of the several states of the United States and the District of Columbia and any member of the armed forces who is an elector or an applicant for admission as an elector, or the member's spouse or dependent if living where such member is stationed, may apply for a blank absentee ballot to vote for all offices being contested at [an] such election or primary. Application shall be made upon a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State or on the federal postcard application form provided pursuant to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, 100 Stat. 924, 42 USC 1973ff et seq., as amended from time to time, or any other applicable law. The municipal clerk receiving such an application shall, as soon as a complete list of candidates and questions to be voted upon at such election or primary becomes available, issue [the ballot] in the manner requested by the elector, either by mail or by electronic means, [as requested by the elector,] the ballot which shall be the blank ballot prescribed and provided by the Secretary of the State under section 9-153e, as amended by this act. The municipal clerk shall include with the ballot a complete list of the offices to be voted upon, the number of individuals for which each elector may vote, the candidates, and, in the case of an election, the party designation of each candidate and questions to be voted upon. If such ballot is issued by electronic means, the municipal clerk at the time of such issuance shall include a certification, prescribed by the Secretary of the State, [that] which the elector shall be required to complete, sign and return with the completed ballot in order for such ballot to be counted. [If application for an absentee ballot is made at the time of availability of

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

regular absentee ballots as provided in section 9-140, the provisions of section 9-140 shall prevail.] Except as otherwise provided in this section, the procedures governing the issuance of ballots under this section shall conform as nearly as may be to the procedures provided in section 9-140, as amended by this act.

Sec. 16. Section 9-158e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) (1) A person applying for a presidential ballot in person shall present: ~~[(1)] (A)~~ A current and valid photo identification, or ~~[(2)] (B)~~ a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. ~~[The application]~~

(2) A person applying for a presidential ballot by mail shall ~~[be accompanied by]~~ include with such application: (A) A copy of a current and valid photo identification, or (B) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or government document that shows the name and address of the voter.

(3) Upon receipt of an application for a presidential ballot under sections 9-158a to 9-158m, inclusive, the municipal clerk, if satisfied that the application is proper and that the applicant is qualified to vote under said sections, shall forthwith ~~[give or mail to the applicant, as the case may be]~~ issue in the manner requested by the applicant, either by mail or by electronic means, a ballot for presidential and vice-presidential electors for use at the election and instructions and envelopes for ~~[its]~~ the return of such ballot.

(b) Upon receipt of an application for an overseas ballot, the municipal clerk, if satisfied that the application is proper and that the applicant is qualified to vote at the federal election for which the application is made, pursuant to the provisions of sections 9-158b to 9-

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

158m, inclusive, shall forthwith [mail] issue in the manner requested by the applicant, either by mail or by electronic means, a ballot containing the names and offices of the candidates for federal office and instructions and envelopes for [its return to the applicant] the return of such ballot.

Sec. 17. Section 9-158f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) The voter, after marking [his] such voter's presidential ballot so as to express [his] such voter's choice, shall fold it so as to conceal the markings, and enclose it in [an inner] a return envelope furnished by the town clerk for such purpose. The envelope shall have imprinted upon its back a statement which shall be signed by the voter. The failure of the voter to date the statement shall not invalidate the ballot. Such statement shall be substantially as follows:

Certification of Presidential Voter

I, the undersigned, do hereby state under the penalties of false statement in absentee balloting that:

(1) I am qualified to vote for Presidential and Vice-Presidential electors in the town of Connecticut, at the presidential election to be held on November ..., 20...

(2) I have not applied, nor do I intend to apply, for a ballot to vote for Presidential and Vice-Presidential electors at said election from any other town, city, county or state, and

(3) I have not voted, and I will not vote otherwise than by this ballot in said presidential election.

Dated at ..., this ... day of ... 20...

.... (Signature of voter)

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

.... (Printed name of voter)

(b) The overseas elector, after marking [his] such elector's overseas ballot so as to express [his] such elector's choice, shall fold it so as to conceal the markings and enclose it in [an inner] a return envelope furnished by the town clerk for such purpose. The envelope shall have imprinted upon its back a statement which shall be signed by the elector. The failure of the elector to date the statement shall not invalidate the ballot. The statement shall be substantially as follows:

Certification of Overseas Elector

I, the undersigned, do hereby state under the penalties of false statement in absentee balloting that:

(1) I am qualified to vote for candidates for federal office in the town of, Connecticut, at the federal election to be held on, 20...

(2) I have not applied, nor do I intend to apply, for a ballot to vote for candidates for federal office at said election from any other town, city or county in Connecticut or in any other state or election district of any state or territory or any territory or possession of the United States.

(3) I have not voted, and I will not vote otherwise than by this ballot in said federal election.

Dated at, this day of, 20...

.... (Signature of overseas elector)

.... (Printed name of overseas elector)

Sec. 18. Section 9-158g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

The voter shall sign the certification upon the [inner] return envelope,

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

[securely seal it, enclose it in an outer serially-numbered envelope] insert the completed ballot in such return envelope, which shall bear a return label displaying the unique ballot identification number both in text format and as a scannable barcode, and return it to the municipal clerk of the town in which [he] such voter is qualified to vote. The clerk shall keep it in [his] the clerk's office until delivered by [him] such clerk to the registrars of voters at the same time and in the same manner as [is provided for absentee ballots] provided in section 9-140c, as amended by this act. If the ballot is returned by a person other than the voter or the United States Postal Service, the person delivering the ballot shall sign [his] such person's name and address and indicate the date and time of [its] such ballot's delivery on the [outer] return envelope in the clerk's presence. The ballot, to be cast, shall be returned so that [it] such ballot is received by the [town] clerk not later than the close of the polls on the day of the election.

Sec. 19. Section 9-158h of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

The clerk shall prepare and keep open to public inspection a list of all persons who have applied under sections 9-158a to 9-158m, inclusive, to vote as presidential voters or overseas electors with their names, voting addresses and application dates together with the [serial number] unique ballot identification numbers of the return envelopes issued, and shall maintain an alphabetical index of the list for a period of one hundred eighty days after the election or primary.

Sec. 20. Section 9-159p of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Any elector may challenge the right of any person offering to vote by absentee ballot based upon false identity, disenfranchisement for conviction of a felony or lack of bona fide residence. The failure of an elector to challenge, pursuant to this section, the right of a person to vote

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

by absentee ballot shall not bar such elector from bringing an action to contest the primary or election under section 9-323, as amended by this act, 9-324, as amended by this act, 9-328, as amended by this act, or 9-329a, as amended by this act, based on the alleged invalidity of the absentee ballot cast at such primary or election.

(b) Challenges shall not be made indiscriminately and may only be made if the challenger knows or reasonably believes that the right of the person offering to vote by absentee ballot should be denied on one or more of the grounds specified in subsection (a) of this section.

(c) Challenges made concerning ballots that the municipal clerk has not delivered to the registrars of voters for counting pursuant to sections 9-140c, as amended by this act, and 9-147a shall be made in writing to the municipal clerk. Challenges made concerning ballots that the municipal clerk has delivered to the registrars of voters for counting pursuant to sections 9-140c, as amended by this act, and 9-147a shall be made in writing to the central counting moderator or the moderator of the polling place at which the ballot is to be counted pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-147a. All challenges shall be made under oath.

(d) Immediately upon receipt of a challenge, the municipal clerk shall send copies of the challenge to each registrar of voters and to the person offering to vote by absentee ballot. The municipal clerk shall send the copy of the challenge to the person offering to vote by first class certified mail to the mailing address shown on the application for the absentee ballot. The municipal clerk shall furnish copies of any written response to the challenge to each registrar of voters. The municipal clerk shall deliver the ballot in the [inner] return envelope, which shall not be opened, [the serially-numbered envelope] and any other evidence relevant to the challenge, to the registrars, who shall sign a receipt for the same.

(e) Immediately upon receipt of a challenge, the moderator shall

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

deliver copies of the challenge to each registrar of voters. The moderator shall also deliver, or designate another election, primary or referendum official to deliver, the ballot in the [inner] return envelope, which shall not be opened, [the serially-numbered envelope] and any other evidence relevant to the challenge to the registrars, who shall sign a receipt for the same.

(f) The registrars of voters shall examine the challenge, any written response to the challenge and any other evidence or information they deem relevant to the challenge, including the [inner] return envelope, which shall not be opened, and shall determine whether the challenge should be upheld. If the registrars fail to agree that the challenge should be upheld, it shall be deemed to have been denied.

(g) The registrars of voters shall make the determination not earlier than noon of the day of the election, primary or referendum at which the ballot is submitted and not later than the time when the counting of all other absentee ballots at the election, primary or referendum has been completed.

(h) The registrars of voters shall notify, in writing, the municipal clerk and the central counting moderator, or the moderator of the polling place at which the ballot is to be counted pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-147a, of their determination. If the challenge is denied, the absentee ballot shall be delivered by the registrars to the appropriate location for counting pursuant to law. If the challenge is upheld, the registrars shall mark the word "rejected" on the [serially-numbered outer] return envelope and note the reasons for rejection, and shall return it together with all other evidence received in connection with the challenge to the municipal clerk who shall retain the same until delivered in accordance with section 9-140c, as amended by this act, except that a challenge to a ballot which the municipal clerk has delivered to the registrars of voters for counting pursuant to sections 9-140c, as amended by this act, and 9-147a shall be returned to the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

moderator to whom the challenge was made.

(i) Within five days after the election, primary or referendum the municipal clerk shall send to the person whose offer to vote was challenged a copy of the written determination of the registrars and a statement as to the disposition of the absentee ballot.

Sec. 21. Subsections (g) to (l), inclusive, of section 9-159q of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(g) The registrars or their designees, as the case may be, shall jointly deliver the ballots to the respective applicants at the institution and shall jointly supervise the voting of such ballots. The ballots shall be returned to the registrars or their designees by the electors in the envelopes provided and in accordance with the provisions of sections 9-137, as amended by this act, [9-139] and 9-140a, as amended by this act. If any elector asks for assistance in voting [his] such elector's ballot, two registrars or their designees of different political parties or, for a primary, their designees of different candidates, shall render such assistance as they deem necessary and appropriate to enable such elector to vote [his] the ballot. The registrars or their designees may reject a ballot when (1) the elector declines to vote a ballot, or (2) the registrars or their designees are unable to determine how the elector who has requested their assistance desires to vote the ballot. When the registrars or their designees reject a ballot, they shall mark the [serially-numbered outer] return envelope "rejected" and note the reasons for rejection. Nothing in this section shall limit the right of an elector to vote [his] the ballot in secret.

(h) After all ballots have been voted or marked "rejected" in accordance with subsection (g) of this section, the registrars or their designees shall jointly deliver or mail them in the envelopes, which shall be sealed, to the appropriate town clerk, who shall retain them until

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

delivered in accordance with section 9-140c, as amended by this act.

(i) When an institution is located in a town having a primary, the registrar in that town of the party holding the primary shall appoint for each such institution, one designee of the party-endorsed candidates and one designee of the contestants from the lists, if any, submitted by the party-endorsed candidates and contestants. Such registrar shall notify all party-endorsed candidates and all contestants of their right to submit a list of potential designees under this section. Each party-endorsed candidate and each contestant may submit to such registrar in writing a list of names of potential designees, provided any such list shall be submitted not later than ten days before the primary. If no such lists are submitted within said period, such registrar shall appoint one designee of the party-endorsed candidates and one designee of the contestants. Each designee appointed pursuant to this section shall be sworn to the faithful performance of [his] such designee's duties, and the registrar shall file a certificate of each designation with [his] the town clerk.

(j) Any registrar of voters who has filed a request that the absentee balloting at an institution be supervised and any registrar required to conduct a supervision of voting under this section, who neglects to perform any of the duties required of [him] such registrar by this section so as to cause any elector to lose [his] such elector's vote shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any registrar from the same town as a registrar who has filed such a request may waive [his] the right to participate in the supervision of absentee balloting.

(k) Notwithstanding any provision of this section, if the spouse or a child of a registrar of voters or a dependent relative residing in the registrar's household is a candidate in the election or primary for which supervised absentee voting is to occur, such registrar shall not supervise such absentee voting but may designate the deputy registrar of voters or an assistant registrar of voters, appointed by the registrar pursuant to

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

section 9-192, to supervise the absentee voting in [his] such registrar's place.

(l) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, the Secretary of the State may suspend the supervision of absentee balloting under this section and section 9-159r, provided the Secretary (1) suspends such supervision of absentee balloting in recognition of a declaration by the Governor of a civil preparedness emergency, pursuant to section 28-9, or a public health emergency, pursuant to section 19-131a, and (2) submits a report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections advising of such suspension and specifying alternative actions to be taken to provide opportunities for absentee voting by electors described in this section and section 9-159r.

Sec. 22. Subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-7b of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(1) To make investigations on its own initiative or with respect to statements filed with the commission by the Secretary of the State, any town clerk or any registrar of voters or upon written complaint under oath by any individual, with respect to alleged violations of any provision of the general statutes relating to any election or referendum, any primary held pursuant to section 9-423, 9-425 or 9-464 or any primary held pursuant to a special act, or alleged violations of any regulation adopted under any such provision, and to hold hearings when the commission deems necessary to investigate violations of any provisions of the general statutes relating to any such election, primary or referendum, or violations of any regulation adopted under any such provisions, and for the purpose of such hearings the commission may administer oaths, examine witnesses and receive oral and documentary evidence, and shall have the power to subpoena witnesses under

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

procedural rules the commission shall adopt, to compel their attendance and to require the production for examination of any books and papers which the commission deems relevant to any matter under investigation or in question. Until the commission determines that it is necessary to investigate a violation, commission members and staff shall keep confidential any information concerning a complaint or preliminary investigation, except upon request of the treasurer, deputy treasurer, chairperson or candidate affiliated with a committee that is the subject of the complaint or preliminary investigation. In connection with its investigation of any alleged violation of any provision of chapter 145, or of any provision of section 9-359 or section 9-359a, as amended by this act, the commission shall also have the power to subpoena any municipal clerk and to require the production for examination of any absentee ballot, [inner and outer] return envelope from which any such ballot has been removed, depository envelope containing any such ballot or [inner or outer] return envelope as provided in sections 9-150a, as amended by this act, and 9-150b, as amended by this act, and any other record, form or document as provided in section 9-150b, as amended by this act, in connection with the election, primary or referendum to which the investigation relates. In case of a refusal to comply with any subpoena issued pursuant to this subsection or to testify with respect to any matter upon which that person may be lawfully interrogated, the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford, on application of the commission, may issue an order requiring such person to comply with such subpoena and to testify; failure to obey any such order of the court may be punished by the court as a contempt thereof. In any matter under investigation which concerns the operation or inspection of or outcome recorded on any voting tabulator, the commission may issue an order to the registrars of voters to impound such tabulator until the investigation is completed;

Sec. 23. Subsection (e) of section 9-23r of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

passage):

(e) If an individual described in subsection (a) of this section does not submit the identification described in subsection (a) of this section as part of the individual's application for admission as an elector, and if the individual votes by absentee ballot in an election for federal office, the individual shall enclose in the [outer absentee ballot envelope, and not in the inner envelope with the ballot] additional envelope provided by the municipal clerk pursuant to section 9-140a, as amended by this act, for the return of such applicant's identification: (1) A copy of a current and valid photo identification, or (2) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. If an individual does not meet the requirements of this subsection in an election for federal office, such [individual's] individual's absentee ballot shall be processed in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (A) of subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 9-150a, as amended by this act, and treated as a provisional ballot for federal office only, pursuant to sections 9-232i to 9-232o, inclusive.

Sec. 24. Section 9-359a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) A person is guilty of false statement in absentee balloting when [he] such person intentionally makes a false written statement in or on, or signs the name of another person to, the application for an absentee ballot or the [inner] return envelope accompanying any such ballot, which [he] such person does not believe to be true and which statement or signature is intended to mislead a public servant in the performance of [his] such public servant's official function.

(b) False statement in absentee balloting is a class D felony.

Sec. 25. Subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

section 9-369b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(B) Each such explanatory text shall be prepared by the municipal clerk and shall specify the intent and purpose of each such proposal or question. Such explanatory text shall not advocate either the approval or disapproval of the proposal or question. The municipal clerk shall cause such question or proposal and such explanatory text to be printed in sufficient supply for public dissemination and shall also provide for the printing of such explanations of proposals or questions on posters of a size to be determined by said clerk. At least three such posters shall be posted at each polling place at which electors will be voting on such proposals or questions. Any posters printed in excess of the number required by this section to be posted may be displayed by said clerk at the clerk's discretion at locations which are frequented by the public. The explanatory text shall also be furnished to each absentee ballot applicant pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of section 9-140, as amended by this act. Each such explanatory text shall be subject to the approval of the municipal attorney.

Sec. 26. Section 9-369a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

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

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

(b) When the clerk of the municipality determines that the necessary action has been taken for submission of the question, [he] the clerk shall,

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

at least forty-five days prior to the election, file in the office of the Secretary of the State a statement setting forth the designation of the question as it is to appear on the ballot at the election, the date upon which the submitting action was taken and the reference to the law under which the action was taken. Such designation shall be in the form of a question, as provided in section 9-369. Whenever it is specifically provided in the general statutes that any such question may be approved for such submission within the period of forty-five days prior to such an election, and action is taken to submit a question within such period, the clerk of the municipality shall file the statement required by this subsection with the Secretary of the State immediately upon the taking of such action.

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

(d) The moderator or head moderator of the election shall file the results of the vote on each such question and the returns of the election with the Secretary of the State in the manner prescribed under the provisions of section 9-314 or other applicable law.

Sec. 27. Subsection (b) of section 9-369c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(b) At any such referendum, any person who [would be] is eligible to

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

vote on the question or proposal [if he appeared in person and is unable to] and who will not appear in person [for one or more of the reasons set forth in section 9-135,] may cast [his] such person's vote by absentee ballot, in accordance with the requirements of this section.

Sec. 28. Subparagraph (B) of subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of section 9-163aa of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by section 69 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

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

Sec. 29. Subparagraph (A) of subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-164 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

(a) (1) (A) On and after January 1, [2022] 2027, and notwithstanding any contrary provision of law, there shall be held in each municipality [.] biennially, or quadrennially if the charter of such municipality so provides, a municipal election on the Tuesday after the first Monday of November of the odd-numbered years, except that such municipal election may be held on the first Monday of May of the odd-numbered years if the legislative body of such municipality so determines by a three-fourths vote.

Sec. 30. Subsection (b) of section 9-19b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(b) Except during the period between the last session for the admission of electors prior to an election and the day following that election, either registrar of voters, or a deputy registrar or assistant

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

registrar appointed in accordance with the provisions of section 9-192 may examine the qualifications of any person applying to be admitted as an elector in the town and, except for applications submitted pursuant to subdivision (4) of this subsection, approve such application submitted in person (1) at the office of such official; (2) at any enrollment session of the registrars of voters; (3) at any public place; (4) at any time and at any place in the town, other than a public place, that is mutually agreed upon by such official and the person applying to be admitted as an elector in the town; or (5) at any public office of the Department of Motor Vehicles, Labor Department or Department of Social Services which is located in the town in which the registrar, deputy registrar or assistant registrar serves, if written notice of the date and time is given seven days in advance thereof to the commissioner of such department. Upon receipt of a written notice under subdivision (5) of this subsection, the commissioner of the department may designate a portion of the public office which shall be used for the admission of electors. The other registrar, or any deputy or assistant registrar, shall be permitted to be present during the admission of any person pursuant to subdivisions (4) and (5) of this subsection. Applications accepted and examined prior to the last session for admission of electors prior to an election pursuant to subdivision (4) of this subsection may be approved after such last session. The admission of any person pursuant to subdivision (4) shall be effective on the date when both registrars approve such application. The registrar who receives such application from the applicant shall give written notice to the other registrar within one business day after such receipt and the registrars shall forthwith act on such applications. No rejection of any application under subdivision (4) of this subsection shall be effective until the registrar has mailed to the other registrar and the applicant a notice stating any reason for the rejection. Any applicant whose application is rejected may appeal under the provisions of section 9-311.

Sec. 31. Section 9-258 of the general statutes is repealed and the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

(a) (1) For municipalities with more than one voting district, the election officials of each polling place shall be electors of the state and shall consist of [(1)] (A) one moderator, [(2)] (B) at least one but not more than two official checkers, [(3)] (C) two assistant registrars of voters of opposite political parties, each of whom shall be residents of the town, [(4)] (D) at least one but not more than two ballot clerks, and [(5)] (E) at least one but not more than two voting tabulator tenders for each voting tabulator in use at the polling place. Head moderators, central counting moderators and absentee ballot counters appointed pursuant to law shall also be deemed election officials.

(2) A known candidate for any office shall not serve as an election official on election day or serve at the polls in any capacity, except that (A) a municipal clerk or a registrar of voters, who is a candidate for the same office, may perform his or her official duties, [and] (B) a deputy registrar of voters, who is a candidate for the office of registrar of voters, may perform his or her official duties, and (C) an assistant municipal clerk, who is a candidate for the office of municipal clerk, may perform his or her official duties.

(3) If, in the opinion of the registrar of voters, the public convenience of the electors in any voting district so requires, provision shall be made for an additional line or lines of electors at the polling place and, if more than one line of electors is established, at least one but not more than two additional official checkers and at least one but not more than two ballot clerks for each line of electors shall be appointed and, if more than one tabulator is used in a polling place, at least one but not more than two additional voting tabulator tenders shall be appointed for each additional machine so used. [Head moderators, central counting moderators and absentee ballot counters appointed pursuant to law shall also be deemed election officials.]

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(b) (1) For municipalities with one voting district, the election officials of such polling place shall be electors of the state and shall consist of ~~[(1)] (A)~~ one moderator, ~~[(2)] (B)~~ at least one but not more than two official checkers, ~~[(3)] (C)~~ at least one but not more than two voting tabulator tenders for each voting tabulator in use at the polling place, and ~~[(4)] (D)~~ at least one but not more than two ballot clerks. Additionally, such election officials may consist of two registrars of voters of opposite political parties, or two assistant registrars of voters of opposite political parties, as the case may be, subject to the requirements of sections 9-259 and 9-439, provided if the registrars of voters are present in the polling place, they shall appoint at least one designee to be present in their office. Head moderators, central counting moderators and absentee ballot counters appointed pursuant to law shall also be deemed election officials.

(2) A known candidate for any office shall not serve as an election official on election day or serve at the polls in any capacity, except that (A) a municipal clerk or a registrar of voters, who is a candidate for the same office, may perform his or her official duties, [and] (B) a deputy registrar of voters, who is a candidate for the office of registrar of voters, may perform his or her official duties, and (C) an assistant municipal clerk, who is a candidate for the office of municipal clerk, may perform his or her official duties.

(3) If, in the opinion of the registrar of voters, the public convenience of the electors in any voting district so requires, provision shall be made for an additional line or lines of electors at the polling place and, if more than one line of electors is established, at least one but not more than two additional official checkers for each line of electors shall be appointed and, if more than one tabulator is used in a polling place, at least one but not more than two additional voting tabulator tenders shall be appointed for each additional tabulator so used. [Head moderators, central counting moderators and absentee ballot counters appointed

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

pursuant to law shall be deemed to be election officials.]

(c) No election official shall perform services for any party or candidate on election day nor appear at any political party headquarters prior to eight o'clock p.m. on election day.

Sec. 32. Section 9-190b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

If [a registrar of voters fails] one or more registrars of voters or deputy registrars of voters of a municipality fail to attain or maintain, whichever is applicable, certification required under subsection (a) of section 9-192a, as amended by this act, or [is the subject] are the subjects of an investigation of any matter related to the duties of [such registrar's office] the office of the registrars of voters of such municipality resulting from a statement filed with the State Elections Enforcement Commission by the Secretary of the State, the Secretary may issue a written instruction, pursuant to section 9-3, as amended by this act, to [such registrar] any or all such registrars or deputy registrars to appear before the Secretary on the date and at such time as provided in such instruction. The Secretary shall cite the reasons for such instruction and inform each such registrar or deputy registrar so appearing that such appearance is for the purpose of determining whether to temporarily relieve such registrar or deputy registrar of his or her duties as provided in this section. [The registrar shall appear before the Secretary and] Each such registrar or deputy registrar so appearing shall be given a fair opportunity to show cause, if any, why such registrar or deputy registrar should not be temporarily relieved of his or her duties. If, after such opportunity, the Secretary determines that the public interest in the orderly conduct of elections would be so served, the Secretary may temporarily relieve any such registrar or deputy registrar of his or her duties and, in the case of a registrar so temporarily relieved, require the deputy registrar [of voters] appointed by such registrar to administer the operations of such office until such certification has been attained or

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

maintained or until the State Elections Enforcement Commission has completed such investigation and taken final action on such matter. The proceeding described in this section shall not be considered a contested case under chapter 54. Nothing in this section shall prohibit a municipality from paying the salary of any such registrar of voters or deputy registrar of voters while such resolution is pending.

Sec. 33. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) If any municipal official, including any election worker, as defined in section 9-364a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, receives from any private or governmental entity, individual or official a subpoena, warrant or other request for or to inspect any record or recording of or produced at, or any tabulator, ballot box or other device used in the conduct of, any election, primary or referendum, such municipal official shall, not later than thirty-six hours after the receipt of such subpoena, warrant or other request, provide a copy of such subpoena, warrant or other request to the offices of the Attorney General and the Secretary of the State. The offices of the Attorney General and the Secretary of the State shall post notice, on each of said offices' Internet web sites, of the methods by which a municipal official may provide such copy to said offices. In the case of the Secretary of the State receiving such a subpoena, warrant or other request, the Secretary shall immediately provide a copy of such subpoena, warrant or other request to the office of the Attorney General.

Sec. 34. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section, "election worker" means any municipal clerk, assistant municipal clerk, registrar of voters, deputy registrar of voters or election official described in section 9-258 of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

(b) The Attorney General may seek preliminary or permanent injunctive, declaratory or other appropriate equitable relief to prevent or redress interference in connection with any election for presidential electors, a senator in Congress or representative in Congress by bringing a complaint to any judge of the Supreme Court, in which the Attorney

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

General shall set out the claimed interference. The Attorney General shall file a certification attached to the complaint indicating that a copy of the complaint has been sent by first-class mail or delivered to the Secretary of the State, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and any other interested party. If such complaint is made prior to such election, such judge shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on the complaint and shall cause notice of the hearing to be given to the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made subsequent to the election, it shall be brought not later than fourteen days after the election. Upon receipt of such complaint, such judge shall forthwith order any injunctive or declaratory relief necessary to preserve or restore the status quo, including, but not limited to, ordering that an election worker retain custody of any record or recording of or produced at, or any tabulator, ballot box or other device used in the conduct of, such election. Upon a showing of exigent circumstances, such judge may issue an immediate ex parte order granting such relief as such judge deems appropriate. Such judge shall forthwith order a hearing to be had upon such complaint, upon a day not more than five or less than three days from the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three or more than five days to be given to any candidate or candidates whose election may be affected by the decision upon such hearing, to any election worker who may be affected by the decision upon such hearing, to the Secretary of the State, to the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to any other party or parties whom such judge deems proper parties thereto, of the time and place for the hearing upon such complaint. Such judge, with two other judges of the Supreme Court to be designated by the Chief Court Administrator, shall, on the day fixed for such hearing and without unnecessary delay, proceed to hear the parties. If sufficient reason is shown, such judges may order that the State Elections Enforcement Commission maintain custody of any record or recording of or produced at, or any tabulator, ballot box or other device used in the conduct of, such election. If sufficient reason is

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

shown, such judges may order permanent injunctive, declaratory or other appropriate equitable relief in connection with the State Elections Enforcement Commission or election worker custody of any record or recording of or produced at, or any tabulator, ballot box or other device used in the conduct of, such election.

Sec. 35. Section 9-311 of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by sections 91 and 92 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) If, within three days after an election, it appears to the moderator that there is a discrepancy in the returns of any voting district, such moderator shall forthwith within said period summon, by written notice delivered personally, the recanvass officials, consisting of at least two checkers of different political parties and at least two absentee ballot counters of different political parties who served at such election, and the registrars of voters of the municipality in which the election was held and such other officials as may be required to conduct such recanvass. Such written notice shall require the clerk or registrars of voters, as the case may be, to bring with them the depository envelopes required by section 9-150a, as amended by [this act] public act 26-1, the package of write-in ballots provided for in section 9-310, the absentee ballot applications, the list of absentee ballot applications, the registry list and the moderators' returns and shall require such recanvass officials to meet at a specified time not later than the fifth business day after such election to recanvass the returns of each voting tabulator, except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, and all absentee ballots and write-in ballots used in the municipality in such election. If any of such recanvass officials are unavailable at the time of the recanvass, the registrar of voters of the same political party as that of the recanvass official unable to attend shall designate another elector having previous training and experience in the conduct of elections to take such recanvass official's place. Before such recanvass is made, such

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

moderator shall give notice, in writing, to the chairperson of the town committee of each political party which nominated candidates for the election, and, in the case of a state election, not later than twenty-four hours after a determination is made regarding the need for a recanvass to the Secretary of the State, of the time and place where such recanvass is to be made; and each such chairperson may send party representatives to be present at such recanvass. Such party representatives may observe, but no one other than a recanvass official may take part in the recanvass. If a party representative notes any irregularity in the recanvass procedure, such party representative shall be permitted to present evidence of such irregularity in any contest relating to the election.

(b) The moderator shall determine the place or places, which may include the office of the Secretary of the State, where the recanvass shall be conducted and, if such recanvass is held before the tabulators are boxed and collected in the manner required by section 9-266, the moderator may require that such recanvass of such tabulators be conducted in each place where the tabulators are located, or the moderator may require that such tabulators be removed to one central place where such recanvass shall be conducted. All recanvassing procedures shall be open to public observation, subject to the provisions of subsection (d) of this section. Such recanvass officials shall, in the presence of such moderator and registrars of voters, make a record of the number on the seal and the number on the protective counter, if one is provided, on each voting tabulator specified by such moderator. Such registrars of voters in the presence of such moderator shall turn over the keys of each such tabulator to such recanvass officials, and such recanvass officials, in the presence of such registrars of voters and moderator, shall immediately proceed to recanvass the vote cast thereon, and shall then open the package of absentee ballots and recanvass the vote cast thereon. In the course of the recanvass of the absentee ballot vote the recanvass officials shall check all [outer] return

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

envelopes for absentee ballots [against the inner envelopes for such ballots and] against the registry list to verify postmarks, addresses and registry list markings and also to determine whether the number of envelopes from which absentee ballots have been removed is the same as the number of persons checked as having voted by absentee ballot. The write-in ballots shall also be recanvassed at this time. Any party representative present shall have a right to view each ballot as it is being recanvassed by the recanvass officials, so as to be able to discern the markings on such ballot. All of the recanvass officials shall use the same forms for tallies and returns as were used at the original canvass and the absentee ballot counters shall also sign the tallies.

(c) The votes shall be announced and recorded in the manner prescribed in section 9-309 on return forms provided by the registrars of voters and appended thereto shall be a statement signed by the moderator indicating the time and place of the recanvass and the names, addresses, titles and party affiliations of the recanvass officials. The write-in ballots shall be replaced in a properly secured sealed package. Upon the completion of such recanvass, any tabulator used in such recanvass shall be locked and sealed, the keys thereof shall immediately be returned to such registrars of voters and such tabulator shall remain so locked until the expiration of fourteen days after such election or for such longer period as is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The absentee ballots shall be replaced in their wrappers and be resealed by the moderator in the presence of the recanvass officials. Upon the completion of such recanvass, such moderator and at least two of the recanvass officials of different political parties shall forthwith prepare and sign such return forms which shall contain a written statement giving the result of such recanvass for each tabulator and each package of absentee ballots whose returns were so recanvassed, setting forth whether or not the original canvass was correctly made and stating whether or not the discrepancy still remains unaccounted for. Such return forms containing such statement shall forthwith be filed by the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

moderator in the office of such clerk. If such recanvass reveals that the original canvass of returns was not correctly made, such return forms containing such statement so filed with the clerk shall constitute a corrected return. In the case of a state election, a recanvass return shall be made in duplicate on a form prescribed and provided by the Secretary of the State, and the moderator shall file one copy with the Secretary of the State and one copy with the town clerk not later than ten days after the election. Such recanvass return shall be substituted for the original return and shall have the same force and effect as an original return.

(d) (1) The moderator may, when any disorder arises that interferes with the conduct of a recanvass, including any attempt by a person other than a recanvass official to take part in such recanvass or by such a person to communicate with a recanvass official, and the offender refuses to submit to the moderator's lawful authority, order that the offender be removed by the recanvass officials from such recanvass until the offender conforms to order or, if need be, until such recanvass is completed.

(2) Each political party or, in the case of an office subject to recanvass for which there is more than one candidate from a political party, each candidate may appoint one representative to communicate directly with the moderator during a recanvass.

(e) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of this section, a recanvass under this section may be conducted with, instead of the voting tabulator or voting tabulators used at the election, either a different voting tabulator or a high-speed voting tabulator whenever (A) such recanvass is conducted at the office of the Secretary of the State, or (B) such recanvass is conducted in the municipality in which such election was held and both (i) the moderator requests to borrow from the Secretary of the State either a different voting tabulator or a high-speed voting tabulator for such purpose, and

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(ii) the Secretary agrees to such request.

(2) The Secretary of the State may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to implement the provisions of this subsection.

[(e)] (f) As used in this section, (1) "moderator" means, in the case of municipalities not divided into voting districts, the moderator of the election and, in the case of municipalities divided into voting districts, the head moderator of the election, and (2) "registrars of voters", in a municipality where there are different registrars of voters for different voting districts, means the registrars of voters in the voting district in which, at the last-preceding election, the presiding officer for the purpose of declaring the result of the vote of the whole municipality was moderator.

Sec. 36. Section 9-311a of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by section 93 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) For purposes of this section, state, district and municipal offices shall be as defined in section 9-372 except that the office of presidential elector shall be deemed a state office. Forthwith after a regular or special election for municipal office, or forthwith upon tabulation of the vote for state and district offices by the Secretary of the State, when at any such election the plurality of an elected candidate for an office over the vote for a defeated candidate receiving the next highest number of votes was either (1) less than a vote equivalent to one-half of one per cent of the total number of votes cast for the office but not more than two thousand votes, or (2) less than twenty votes, there shall be a recanvass of the returns of the voting tabulator or voting tabulators and absentee ballots used in such election for such office unless such defeated candidate or defeated candidates, as the case may be, for such office file a written statement waiving this right to such canvass with the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

municipal clerk in the case of a municipal office, or with the Secretary of the State in the case of a state or district office. In the case of state and district offices, the Secretary of the State upon tabulation of the votes for such offices shall notify the town clerks in the state or district, as the case may be, of the state and district offices which qualify for an automatic canvass and shall also notify each candidate for any such office. When a canvass is to be held, the municipal clerk shall promptly notify the moderator, as defined in section 9-311, as amended by [this act] public act 26-1, who shall proceed forthwith to cause a canvass of such returns of the office in question in the same manner as is provided in section 9-311, as amended by [this act] public act 26-1. In addition to the notice required under section 9-311, as amended by [this act] public act 26-1, the moderator shall, before such canvass is [made] conducted, give notice in writing to each candidate for a municipal office that qualifies for an automatic canvass under this section of the time when [.] and place, which may include the office of the Secretary of the State, where [.] such canvass is to be [made to each candidate for a municipal office which qualifies for an automatic canvass under this section] conducted. Nothing in this section shall preclude the right to judicial proceedings on behalf of a candidate under any provision of chapter 149. For the purposes of this section, "the total number of votes cast for the office" means, in the case of multiple openings for the same office, the total number of electors checked as having voted in the state, district, municipality or political subdivision, as the case may be. When a canvass of the returns for an office for which there are multiple openings is required by the provisions of this section, the returns for all candidates for all openings for the office shall be canvassed. If a candidate notes any irregularity in the canvass procedure, such candidate shall be permitted to present evidence of such irregularity in any contest relating to the election.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, a canvass under this section may be conducted with, instead

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

of the voting tabulator or voting tabulators used at the election, either a different voting tabulator or a high-speed voting tabulator whenever (A) such recanvass is conducted at the office of the Secretary of the State, or (B) such recanvass is conducted in the municipality in which such election was held and both (i) the moderator requests to borrow from the Secretary of the State either a different voting tabulator or a high-speed voting tabulator for such purpose, and (ii) the Secretary agrees to such request.

(2) The Secretary of the State may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to implement the provisions of this subsection.

Sec. 37. Section 9-311b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) If the electors fail to elect a candidate for any office by reason of an equality of votes at any election, there shall be a recanvass of the returns for such office, in the same manner as is provided in section 9-311, as amended by this act, unless, prior to the time of such recanvass, all but one of the candidates so receiving an equal number of votes dies, withdraws his name or for any reason becomes disqualified to hold such office.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, a recanvass under this section may be conducted with, instead of the voting tabulator or voting tabulators used at the election, a different voting tabulator or a high-speed voting tabulator whenever (A) such recanvass is conducted at the office of the Secretary of the State, or (B) such recanvass is conducted in the municipality in which such election was held and both (i) the moderator requests to borrow from the Secretary of the State either a different voting tabulator or a high-speed voting tabulator for such purpose, and (ii) the Secretary agrees to such request.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(2) The Secretary of the State may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to implement the provisions of this subsection.

Sec. 38. Section 9-23l of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Registrars of voters shall accept the mail voter registration application form prescribed by the [Federal] Election Assistance Commission pursuant to the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, P.L. 103-31, as amended from time to time, as an application for admission as an elector for all elections in Connecticut. The procedures in subsections (c), (d), (f) and (g) of section 9-23g which are not inconsistent with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, P.L. 103-31, as amended from time to time, shall apply to applications made under this section.

Sec. 39. Section 9-23m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

The Secretary of the State shall make available for distribution the mail voter registration application form prescribed by the [Federal] Election Assistance Commission pursuant to the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, P.L. 103-31, as amended from time to time. The secretary may make any changes in any forms required by this title which, in the opinion of the secretary, are necessary to cause said forms to conform to the provisions of applicable federal law.

Sec. 40. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Any citizen who has not yet attained the age of eighteen years but who will have attained the age of eighteen years on or before the day of an election, and who is otherwise qualified to be an elector and has applied for admission as an elector, may vote at such election during the period of early voting or by absentee ballot.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

Sec. 41. Section 9-374 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

(a) No authority of the state or any political subdivision thereof having jurisdiction over the conduct of any primary shall permit the name of a party-endorsed candidate for an office or position to be printed on the official ballot to be used at any such primary unless a copy of the party rules regulating such party and its method of selecting party-endorsed candidates for nomination to such office or for election as town committee members, as the case may be, has been filed in the office of the Secretary of the State at least sixty days before such candidate is selected under such method of endorsement. The selection of delegates to conventions shall not be valid unless at least one copy of the party rules regulating the manner of making such selection has been filed in the office of the Secretary of the State at least sixty days before such selection is made. A duplicate copy of such rules shall also be filed with the state central committee of such party. A copy of the local party rules, relating to a party in a municipality, shall be filed forthwith by the town chairman or the secretary of the town committee of such party in such municipality with the Secretary of the State. The state party rules shall be filed by the state chairman or the secretary of the state central committee of such party.

(b) In the case of a minor party, no authority of the state or any subdivision thereof having jurisdiction over the conduct of any election shall permit the name of a candidate of such party for any office to be printed on the official ballot unless at least one copy of the party rules regulating the manner of nominating a candidate for such office has been filed in the office of the Secretary of the State at least one hundred eighty days before the nomination of such candidate. In the case of a minor party, the selection of town committee members and delegates to conventions shall not be valid unless at least one copy of the party rules regulating the manner of making such selection has been filed in the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

office of the Secretary of the State at least sixty days before such selection is made. [A] In the case of a minor party, a copy of local party rules shall forthwith be also filed with the town clerk of the municipality to which they relate, except that for any municipality in which no town committee of such minor party exists and no local party rules of such minor party have been filed with the town clerk, the state party rules of such minor party that have been filed with the office of the Secretary of the State shall be deemed the party rules for purposes of enrolled members and candidates of such minor party in such municipality.

(c) Party rules shall not be effective until sixty days after the filing of the same with the Secretary of the State. A party in any municipality for which local party rules with respect to any office or position have not been filed as provided in this section shall, as to such office or position, be subject to the provisions of the effective state rules of such party applicable in municipalities which do not have local party rules, until such time as local party rules therefor are filed and become effective as provided in this section. The town chairman of a party in any municipality for which local party rules have not been adopted and filed as provided in this section shall forthwith file a statement with the Secretary of the State to the effect that such party in such municipality does not have local party rules. Any dispute arising under the party rules of any party shall be referred to the state central committee of such party.

(d) The term "party rules" as used in this section includes any amendment to such party rules. When any amendment is to be filed as required by this section, complete party rules incorporating such amendment shall be filed, together with a separate copy of such amendment. All party rules and all amendments to such party rules shall ensure such party's compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USC 12101, et seq., as amended from time to time.

Sec. 42. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 9-409 of the general statutes

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, petition forms for candidacies for nomination to municipal office or for election as members of town committees shall be available from the registrar [beginning on the day following the making of the party's endorsement of a candidate or candidates for such office or position, or] beginning on the day following the final day for the making of [such endorsement] the party's endorsement of a candidate or candidates for such office or position under the provisions of section 9-391, as amended by this act. [whichever comes first.]

(b) Petition forms for candidacies for nomination to the municipal offices of state senator and state representative shall be available from the registrar beginning on the seventy-seventh day preceding the day of the primary for such office.

Sec. 43. Section 7-22 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

Whenever [complaint in writing is made to the Attorney General that the town clerk of any town is guilty of misconduct, wilful and material neglect of duty or incompetence in the conduct of such town clerk's office, the Attorney General shall make such investigation of the charges] the State Elections Enforcement Commission consults with the Attorney General pursuant to subdivision (7) of subsection (a) of section 9-7b as the result of an investigation made pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-7b, as amended by this act, with respect to an alleged violation by a municipal clerk of any provision of the general statutes relating to any election, primary or referendum described in subdivision (1) of said subsection, or of any regulation adopted under any such provision, the Attorney General may make such investigation of the alleged violation as the Attorney General deems proper and shall,

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

if the Attorney General is of the opinion that the evidence obtained warrants such action, prepare a statement in writing of [the charges against such town clerk] such municipal clerk's alleged violations, together with a citation in the name of the state, commanding such [town] municipal clerk to appear before a judge of the Superior Court at a date named in the citation and show cause, if any, why such [town] municipal clerk should not be removed from office as provided in this section. The Attorney General shall cause a copy of such statement and citation to be served by some proper officer upon the defendant [town] municipal clerk at least ten days before the date of appearance named in such citation, and the original statement and citation, with the return of the officer thereon, shall be returned to the clerk of the superior court for the judicial district within which such [town] municipality is situated. To carry into effect the proceedings authorized by this section, the Attorney General shall have power to summon witnesses, require the production of necessary books, papers and other documents and administer oaths to witnesses; and upon the date named in such citation for the appearance of such [town] municipal clerk, or upon any adjourned date fixed by the judge before whom such proceedings are pending, the Attorney General shall appear and conduct the hearing on behalf of the state. If, after a full hearing of all the evidence offered by the Attorney General and by and on behalf of the defendant, such judge is of the opinion that the evidence presented warrants the removal of such [town] municipal clerk from office, the judge shall cause to be prepared a written order to that effect, which order shall be signed by the judge and lodged with the clerk of the superior court for the judicial district in which such defendant resides. Such clerk of the superior court shall cause a certified copy of such order to be served forthwith upon such [town] municipal clerk, and upon such service the office held by such [town] municipal clerk shall become vacant, notwithstanding the pendency of any appeal of such written order, and the vacancy thereby created shall be filled at once in the manner provided in section 9-220. Any witnesses summoned and any officer making service under the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

provisions of this section shall be allowed and paid by the state the same fees as are allowed by law in criminal prosecutions.

Sec. 44. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2027*) (a) Not earlier than the fifteenth day after any state election and not later than two business days before the canvass of votes by the Secretary of the State, Treasurer and Comptroller, commencing on a day designated by the Secretary, the registrars of voters shall conduct a risk-limiting audit of such election. Each such audit shall be noticed in advance and be open to public observation. Any election official who participates in the administration and conduct of an audit pursuant to this section shall be compensated by the municipality at the standard rate of pay established by such municipality for elections.

(b) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, the offices subject to a risk-limiting audit pursuant to this section shall be (A) the office of presidential elector, if applicable, (B) all applicable state offices, as defined in section 9-372 of the general statutes, (C) at least one representative in Congress, selected in a random drawing by the Secretary of the State, (D) at least five per cent, in the aggregate, of the offices of state senator and state representative, selected in a random drawing by the Secretary, and (E) any other office required to be audited by federal law. Whenever an office is randomly selected by the Secretary under this subsection, the selection process shall be open to the public.

(2) (A) If an office of representative in Congress is subject to recanvass, other than under section 9-311a, as amended by this act, or 9-311b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or to an election contest pursuant to any provision of the general statutes, the Secretary of the State shall ensure such office is included in the office or offices selected under subparagraph (C) of subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(B) If an office of state senator or state representative is subject to recanvass, other than under section 9-311a, as amended by this act, or 9-

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

311b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or to an election contest pursuant to any provision of the general statutes, the Secretary of the State shall ensure such office is included in the offices selected under subparagraph (D) of subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(C) If any office is subject to recanvass under section 9-311a, as amended by this act, or 9-311b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or if a candidate was elected to an office without opposition by another candidate for such office, the Secretary of the State shall ensure such office is excluded from the offices selected under subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(c) Prior to the day designated by the Secretary of the State for the commencement of the risk-limiting audit described in subsection (a) of this section, the registrars of voters shall submit to the Secretary the ballot manifests created under section 47 of this act.

(d) The risk-limiting audit described in subsection (a) of this section shall be conducted in accordance with instructions and procedures prescribed by the Secretary of the State not later than January 1, 2027, which instructions and procedures shall be consistent across all offices subject to such audit. The risk limit for each such audit shall be not more than five per cent. The results of each audit conducted pursuant to this section, including any such audit that produces an outcome of "INCONCLUSIVE" as described in subsection (e) of this section, shall be reported on a form and in a manner prescribed by the Secretary. Such reported results shall be filed with the Secretary, who shall immediately forward such reported results to The University of Connecticut for analysis. The University of Connecticut shall submit to the Secretary a written report regarding such analysis that describes any concerns identified. After receipt of such written report, the Secretary shall transmit a copy of such written report to the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(e) In the event a risk-limiting audit conducted pursuant to this section for a particular office produces an outcome of "INCONCLUSIVE", the Secretary of the State shall order a manual recount of all ballots cast for such office.

(f) If the written report submitted by The University of Connecticut under subsection (d) of this section indicates that a voting tabulator failed to record votes accurately and in the manner provided by title 9 of the general statutes, the Secretary of the State shall require that the voting tabulator be examined and recertified by the Secretary or the Secretary's designee. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the Secretary from requiring that a voting tabulator be examined and recertified.

(g) The audit results reported to the Secretary of the State pursuant to subsection (d) of this section shall be open to public inspection and may be used as prima facie evidence of an irregularity in any contest arising pursuant to chapter 149 of the general statutes or for any other cause of action arising from such election.

(h) If the audit officials are unable to reconcile the results from an audit described in subsection (a) of this section with the outcome of the person declared elected by virtue of having received the greatest number of votes, as determined by the paper ballots, the Secretary of the State shall conduct such further investigation of the voting tabulator as may be necessary for the purpose of reviewing whether or not to decertify the voting tabulator or tabulators in question or to order the voting tabulator to be examined and recertified in accordance with subsection (f) of this section. Any report produced by the Secretary as a result of such investigation shall be filed with the State Elections Enforcement Commission, and the commission may initiate such further investigation in accordance with subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-7b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, as may be required to determine if any violations of the general statutes

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

concerning election law have been committed.

(i) The individual paper ballots used at an election shall be carefully preserved and returned in their designated receptacle in accordance with the requirements of section 9-266 or 9-310 of the general statutes, as applicable.

(j) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude any candidate or elector from seeking additional remedies pursuant to chapter 149 of the general statutes.

(k) After a state election, any voting tabulator may be kept locked for a period longer than that prescribed by sections 9-266, 9-310 and 9-447 of the general statutes, if such an extended period is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction, the Secretary of the State or the State Elections Enforcement Commission. Such court or the Secretary of the State may order an audit of such voting tabulator to be conducted by such persons as the court or the Secretary may designate, provided the State Elections Enforcement Commission may order such an audit where the particular office in question is that of the Secretary of the State. If the machine utilized in such election is an optical scan voting system, such order to lock such machine shall include the tabulator, memory card and all other components and processes utilized in the programming of such machine.

(l) The Secretary of the State may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, for the conduct of risk-limiting audits described in subsection (a) of this section and to establish guidelines for expanded audits when the results from such a risk-limiting audit cannot be reconciled with the outcome of the person declared elected by virtue of having received the greatest number of votes, as determined by the paper ballots.

(m) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

Secretary of the State shall have access to the code in any voting machine whenever any problem is discovered as a result of an audit described in subsection (a) of this section.

(n) As used in this section:

(1) "Risk-limiting audit" means a publicly verifiable auditing procedure that (A) manually examines a statistical sample of paper ballots that reflect the intents of the voters having cast such ballots, (B) produces an outcome of either "ACCEPTABLE" or "INCONCLUSIVE", and (C) guarantees a specified risk limit;

(2) "Risk limit" means the maximum probability that an audit would produce an outcome of "ACCEPTABLE" when there is a disagreement between the person declared elected and the person who received the greatest number of votes as determined by the paper ballots; and

(3) "State election" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-1 of the general statutes.

Sec. 45. Subsection (a) of section 9-320 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

(a) The clerk of each municipality shall, [within ten days after the municipal election] not later than the last day of the month in which the municipal election was held, return to the Secretary of the State a statement of the name, post-office address and term of each person elected to office in such election. If an elected [town] municipal clerk is registrar of vital statistics, ex officio, such return shall so indicate. Each municipal clerk neglecting to make such return shall be fined not more than twenty-five dollars.

Sec. 46. Section 9-320f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(a) [(1)] Not earlier than the fifteenth day after any federal or state [election or] primary or any municipal election or primary and not later than two business days before the canvass of votes by the Secretary of the State, Treasurer and Comptroller, [and (2) not earlier than the fifth day after any municipal election or primary and not later than two business days before the canvass of votes] or by the town clerk, as applicable, the registrars of voters shall conduct a manual audit, or an electronic audit authorized under section 9-320g, as amended by this act, of the votes recorded in not less than five per cent of the voting districts in the state, district or municipality, whichever is applicable. For the purposes of this section, any central location used in a municipality for the counting of absentee ballots, early voting ballots or same-day election registration ballots shall be deemed a voting district. Such manual or electronic audit shall be noticed in advance and be open to public observation. Any election official who participates in the administration and conduct of an audit pursuant to this section shall be compensated by the municipality at the standard rate of pay established by such municipality for elections or primaries, as the case may be.

(b) The voting districts subject to an audit described in subsection (a) of this section shall be selected in a random drawing by the Secretary of the State and such selection process shall be open to the public. The offices subject to an audit pursuant to this section shall be, (1) [in the case of an election where the office of presidential elector is on the ballot, all offices required to be audited by federal law, plus one additional office selected in a random drawing by the Secretary of the State, but in no case less than three offices, (2) in the case of an election where the office of Governor is on the ballot, all offices required to be audited by federal law, plus one additional office selected in a random drawing by the Secretary of the State, but in no case less than three offices, (3)] in the case of a municipal election, three offices or twenty per cent of the number of offices on the ballot, whichever is greater, selected at random by the municipal clerk, and [(4)] (2) in the case of a primary, [election,]

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

all offices required to be audited by federal law, plus one additional office, if any, but in no event less than twenty per cent of the offices on the ballot, selected in a random drawing by the municipal clerk.

(c) If a selected voting district has an office that is subject to recanvass or an election or primary contest pursuant to any provision of the general statutes, the Secretary of the State shall select an alternative district, pursuant to the process described in subsection (b) of this section.

(d) The manual or electronic audit described in subsection (a) of this section shall consist of the manual or electronic tabulation of the paper ballots cast and counted by each voting tabulator subject to such audit. Once complete, the vote totals established pursuant to such manual or electronic tabulation shall be compared to the results reported by the voting tabulator on the day of the election or primary. The results of such manual or electronic tabulation shall be reported on a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State which shall include the total number of ballots counted, the total votes received by each candidate in question, the total votes received by each candidate in question on ballots that were properly completed by each voter and the total votes received by each candidate in question on ballots that were not properly completed by each voter. Such [report] reported results shall be filed with the Secretary, [of the State] who shall immediately forward such [report] reported results to The University of Connecticut for analysis. The University of Connecticut shall [file] submit to the Secretary a written report [with the Secretary of the State] regarding such analysis that describes any discrepancies identified. After receipt of such written report, the Secretary [of the State shall file such report with] shall transmit a copy of such written report to the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

(e) For the purposes of this section, a ballot that has not been properly completed will be deemed to be a ballot on which (1) votes have been

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

marked by the voter outside the vote targets, (2) votes have been marked by the voter using a manual marking device that cannot be read by the voting tabulator, or (3) in the judgment of the registrars of voters, the voter marked the ballot in such a manner that the voting tabulator may not have read the marks as votes cast.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-311, as amended by this act, the Secretary of the State shall order a discrepancy recanvass of the returns of an election or primary for any office if a discrepancy, as defined in subsection (o) of this section, exists where the margin of victory in the race for such office is less than the amount of the discrepancy multiplied by the total number of voting districts where such race appeared on the ballot, provided in a year in which the Secretary of the State is a candidate for an office on the ballot and that office is subject to an audit as provided by this section, the State Elections Enforcement Commission shall order a discrepancy recanvass if a discrepancy, as defined by subsection (o) of this section, has occurred that could affect the outcome of the election or primary for such office.

(g) If the written report submitted by The University of Connecticut [report described in] under subsection (d) of this section indicates that a voting tabulator failed to record votes accurately and in the manner provided by [the general statutes] this title, the Secretary of the State shall require that the voting tabulator be examined and recertified by the Secretary, [of the State,] or the Secretary's designee. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the Secretary [of the State] from requiring that a voting tabulator be examined and recertified.

(h) The audit [report filed] results reported to the Secretary of the State pursuant to subsection (d) of this section shall be open to public inspection and may be used as prima facie evidence of a discrepancy in any contest arising pursuant to chapter 149 or for any other cause of action arising from such election or primary.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(i) If the audit officials are unable to reconcile the manual or electronic count from an audit described in subsection (a) of this section with the electronic vote tabulation and discrepancies from the election or primary, the Secretary of the State shall conduct such further investigation of the voting tabulator malfunction as may be necessary for the purpose of reviewing whether or not to decertify the voting tabulator or tabulators in question or to order the voting tabulator to be examined and recertified [pursuant to] in accordance with subsection (g) of this section. Any report produced by the Secretary [of the State] as a result of such investigation shall be filed with the State Elections Enforcement Commission and the commission may initiate such further investigation in accordance with subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-7b, as amended by this act, as may be required to determine if any violations of the general statutes concerning election law have been committed.

(j) The individual paper ballots used at an election or primary shall be carefully preserved and returned in their designated receptacle in accordance with the requirements of section 9-266 or 9-310, [whichever is] as applicable.

(k) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude any candidate or elector from seeking additional remedies pursuant to chapter 149.

(l) After an election or primary, any voting tabulator may be kept locked for a period longer than that prescribed by sections 9-266, 9-310 and 9-447, if such an extended period is ordered by [either] a court of competent jurisdiction, the Secretary of the State or the State Elections Enforcement Commission. [Either the] Such court or the Secretary of the State may order an audit of such voting tabulator to be conducted by such persons as the court or the Secretary [of the State] may designate, provided the State Elections Enforcement Commission may order such an audit under the circumstances prescribed in subsection (f) of this

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

section. If the machine utilized in such election or primary is an optical scan voting system, such order to lock such machine shall include the tabulator, memory card and all other components and processes utilized in the programming of such machine.

(m) The Secretary of the State may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, [as may be necessary] for the conduct of the manual or electronic tabulation of the paper ballots described in subsection (a) of this section and to establish guidelines for expanded audits when there are differences between the manual or electronic counts from the audit described in subsection (a) of this section and tabulator counts from the election or primary.

(n) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, the Secretary of the State shall have access to the code in any voting machine whenever any problem is discovered as a result of an audit described in subsection (a) of this section.

(o) As used in this section: [, "discrepancy"]

(1) "Discrepancy" means any difference in vote totals between tabulator counts from an election or primary and manual or electronic counts from an audit described in subsection (a) of this section in a voting district that exceeds one-half of one per cent of the lesser amount of the vote totals between such tabulator counts and such manual or electronic counts where such differences cannot be resolved through an accounting of ballots that were not marked properly in accordance with subsection (e) of this section; [, "state election" means "state election", as defined in section 9-1, "municipal election"]

(2) "Municipal election" means a municipal election held pursuant to section 9-164, as amended by this act; [, "manual"]

(3) "Manual" means by hand and without the assistance of electronic equipment; and ["electronic"]

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(4) "Electronic" means through the use of equipment described in section 9-320g, as amended by this act.

Sec. 47. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2027*) (a) Except in the case of a recanvass subject to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, not later than seventy-two hours after the close of the polls at each state election, as defined in section 9-1 of the general statutes:

(1) The election officials in each polling place shall create a ballot manifest for such polling place in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Secretary of the State; and

(2) The absentee ballot counters in each central counting location shall create a ballot manifest for such central counting location in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Secretary of the State.

(b) Not later than twenty-four hours after the completion of any recanvass conducted at a state election in a voting district, the recanvass officials shall create a ballot manifest for such district in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Secretary of the State.

(c) All ballot manifest creation procedures shall be open to public observation.

(d) Immediately after a ballot manifest has been created pursuant to this section, the moderator shall submit such ballot manifest to the registrars of voters.

Sec. 48. Section 9-323 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

Any elector or candidate who claims that he or she is aggrieved by any ruling of any election official in connection with any election for presidential electors and for a senator in Congress and for representative in Congress or any of them, held in his or her town, or

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

that there was a mistake in the count of the votes cast at such election for candidates for such electors, senator in Congress and representative in Congress, or any of them, at any voting district in his or her town, or any candidate for such an office who claims that he or she is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of section 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, 9-364, 9-364a, as amended by this act, or 9-365 in the casting of absentee ballots at such election, may bring his or her complaint to any judge of the Supreme Court, in which he or she shall set out the claimed errors of such election official, the claimed errors in the count or the claimed violations of said sections. In any action brought pursuant to the provisions of this section, the complainant shall file a certification attached to the complaint indicating that a copy of the complaint has been sent by first-class mail or delivered to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made prior to such election, such judge shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on the complaint and shall cause notice of the hearing to be given to the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made subsequent to the election, it shall be brought not later than fourteen days after the election or, if such complaint is brought in response to [the manual tabulation of paper ballots authorized] an audit conducted pursuant to section 9-320f, as amended by this act, or section 44 of this act, such complaint shall be brought not later than seven days after the close of any such [manual tabulation] audit, and in either such circumstance, the judge shall forthwith order a hearing to be had upon such complaint, upon a day not more than five or less than three days from the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three or more than five days to be given to any candidate or candidates whose election may be affected by the decision upon such hearing, to such election official, to the Secretary of the State, to the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to any other party or parties whom such judge deems proper parties thereto, of the time and place for the hearing upon such complaint. Such judge, with two other judges of the Supreme Court to be designated by the Chief Court

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

Administrator, shall, on the day fixed for such hearing and without unnecessary delay, proceed to hear the parties. If sufficient reason is shown, such judges may order any voting tabulators to be unlocked or any ballot boxes to be opened and a recount of the votes cast, including absentee ballots, to be made. Such judges shall thereupon, in the case they, or any two of them, find any error in the rulings of the election official, any mistake in the count of such votes or any violation of said sections, certify the result of their finding or decision, or the finding or decision of a majority of them, to the Secretary of the State before the first Tuesday after the second Wednesday in December. Such judges may order a new election or a change in the existing election schedule, provided such order complies with Section 302 of the Help America Vote Act, P.L. 107-252, as amended from time to time. Such certificate of such judges, or a majority of them, shall be final upon all questions relating to the rulings of such election officials, to the correctness of such count and, for the purposes of this section only, such claimed violations, and shall operate to correct the returns of the moderators or presiding officers so as to conform to such finding or decision.

Sec. 49. Section 9-324 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

Any elector or candidate who claims that such elector or candidate is aggrieved by any ruling of any election official in connection with any election for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, State Treasurer, Attorney General, State Comptroller or judge of probate, held in such elector's or candidate's town, or that there has been a mistake in the count of the votes cast at such election for candidates for said offices or any of them, at any voting district in such elector's or candidate's town, or any candidate for such an office who claims that such candidate is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of section 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, 9-364, 9-364a, as amended by this act, or 9-365 in the casting of absentee ballots at such election or any candidate for the office

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, State Treasurer, Attorney General or State Comptroller, who claims that such candidate is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of sections 9-700 to 9-716, inclusive, may bring such elector's or candidate's complaint to any judge of the Superior Court, in which such elector or candidate shall set out the claimed errors of such election official, the claimed errors in the count or the claimed violations of said sections. In any action brought pursuant to the provisions of this section, the complainant shall send a copy of the complaint by first-class mail, or deliver a copy of the complaint by hand, to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made prior to such election, such judge shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on the complaint and shall cause notice of the hearing to be given to the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made subsequent to the election, it shall be brought not later than fourteen days after the election or, if such complaint is brought in response to [the manual tabulation of paper ballots authorized] an audit conducted pursuant to section 9-320f, as amended by this act, or section 44 of this act, such complaint shall be brought not later than seven days after the close of any such [manual tabulation] audit and, in either such circumstance, such judge shall forthwith order a hearing to be had upon such complaint, upon a day not more than five nor less than three days from the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three nor more than five days to be given to any candidate or candidates whose election may be affected by the decision upon such hearing, to such election official, the Secretary of the State, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to any other party or parties whom such judge deems proper parties thereto, of the time and place for the hearing upon such complaint. Such judge shall, on the day fixed for such hearing and without unnecessary delay, proceed to hear the parties. If sufficient reason is shown, such judge may order any voting tabulators to be unlocked or any ballot boxes to be opened and a recount of the votes cast, including absentee ballots, to be made. Such judge shall thereupon,

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

in case such judge finds any error in the rulings of the election official, any mistake in the count of the votes or any violation of said sections, certify the result of such judge's finding or decision to the Secretary of the State before the fifteenth day of the next succeeding December. Such judge may order a new election or a change in the existing election schedule. Such certificate of such judge of such judge's finding or decision shall be final and conclusive upon all questions relating to errors in the rulings of such election officials, to the correctness of such count, and, for the purposes of this section only, such claimed violations, and shall operate to correct the returns of the moderators or presiding officers, so as to conform to such finding or decision, unless the same is appealed from as provided in section 9-325.

Sec. 50. Section 9-328 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

Any elector or candidate claiming to have been aggrieved by any ruling of any election official in connection with an election for any municipal office or a primary for justice of the peace, or any elector or candidate claiming that there has been a mistake in the count of votes cast for any such office at such election or primary, or any candidate in such an election or primary claiming that he is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of sections 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, 9-364, 9-364a, as amended by this act, or 9-365 in the casting of absentee ballots at such election or primary, may bring a complaint to any judge of the Superior Court for relief therefrom. In any action brought pursuant to the provisions of this section, the complainant shall send a copy of the complaint by first-class mail, or deliver a copy of the complaint by hand, to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made prior to such election or primary, such judge shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on the complaint and shall cause notice of the hearing to be given to the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

subsequent to such election or primary, it shall be brought not later than fourteen days after such election or primary, except that if such complaint is brought in response to [the manual tabulation of paper ballots, authorized] an audit conducted pursuant to section 9-320f, as amended by this act, or section 44 of this act, such complaint shall be brought not later than seven days after the close of any such [manual tabulation] audit, to any judge of the Superior Court, in which he shall set out the claimed errors of the election official, the claimed errors in the count or the claimed violations of said sections. Such judge shall forthwith order a hearing to be had upon such complaint, upon a day not more than five nor less than three days from the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three nor more than five days to be given to any candidate or candidates whose election or nomination may be affected by the decision upon such hearing, to such election official, the Secretary of the State, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and to any other party or parties whom such judge deems proper parties thereto, of the time and place for the hearing upon such complaint. Such judge shall, on the day fixed for such hearing and without unnecessary delay, proceed to hear the parties. If sufficient reason is shown, he may order any voting tabulators to be unlocked or any ballot boxes to be opened and a recount of the votes cast, including absentee ballots, to be made. Such judge shall thereupon, if he finds any error in the rulings of the election official or any mistake in the count of the votes, certify the result of his finding or decision to the Secretary of the State before the tenth day succeeding the conclusion of the hearing. Such judge may order a new election or primary or a change in the existing election schedule. Such certificate of such judge of his finding or decision shall be final and conclusive upon all questions relating to errors in the ruling of such election officials, to the correctness of such count, and, for the purposes of this section only, such claimed violations, and shall operate to correct the returns of the moderators or presiding officers, so as to conform to such finding or decision, except that this section shall not affect the right of appeal to the Supreme Court and it

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

shall not prevent such judge from reserving such questions of law for the advice of the Supreme Court as provided in section 9-325. Such judge may, if necessary, issue his writ of mandamus, requiring the adverse party and those under him to deliver to the complainant the appurtenances of such office, and shall cause his finding and decree to be entered on the records of the Superior Court in the proper judicial district.

Sec. 51. Subsection (a) of section 9-329a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

(a) Any (1) elector or candidate aggrieved by a ruling of an election official in connection with any primary held pursuant to (A) section 9-423, 9-425 or 9-464, or (B) a special act, (2) elector or candidate who alleges that there has been a mistake in the count of the votes cast at such primary, or (3) candidate in such a primary who alleges that he is aggrieved by a violation of any provision of sections 9-355, 9-357 to 9-361, inclusive, 9-364, 9-364a, as amended by this act, or 9-365 in the casting of absentee ballots at such primary, may bring his complaint to any judge of the Superior Court for appropriate action. In any action brought pursuant to the provisions of this section, the complainant shall file a certification attached to the complaint indicating that a copy of the complaint has been sent by first-class mail or delivered to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made prior to such primary such judge shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on the complaint and shall cause notice of the hearing to be given to the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission. If such complaint is made subsequent to such primary it shall be brought, not later than fourteen days after such primary, or if such complaint is brought in response to [the manual tabulation of paper ballots, described in] an audit conducted pursuant to section 9-320f, as amended by this act, or section 44 of this act, such complaint

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

shall be brought, not later than seven days after the close of any such [manual tabulation] audit, to any judge of the Superior Court.

Sec. 52. Subsection (b) of section 9-3 of the general statutes, as amended by section 89 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

(b) During any municipal, state or federal election, primary or recanvass, or any audit conducted pursuant to section 9-320f, as amended by this act, or section 44 of this act, the Secretary of the State may issue an order, whether orally or in writing, to any registrar of voters or moderator to correct any irregularity or impropriety in the conduct of such election, primary or recanvass or audit. Any such order shall be effective upon issuance. As soon as practicable after issuance of an oral order pursuant to this subsection, the Secretary shall reduce such order to writing, cite within such order any applicable provision of law authorizing such order and cause a copy of such written order to be delivered to the individual who is the subject of such order or, in the case that such order was originally issued in writing, issue a subsequent written order that conforms to such requirements. The Superior Court, on application of the Secretary or the Attorney General, may enforce by appropriate decree or process any such order issued pursuant to this subsection.

Sec. 53. Subdivision (3) of subsection (b) of section 9-229 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

(3) The duties of each regional election advisor shall include, but not be limited to: (A) Holding the instructional sessions described in subdivision (2) of this subsection; (B) communicating with registrars of voters to assist, to the extent permitted under law, in preparations for and operations of any election, primary or recanvass, or any audit conducted pursuant to section 9-320f, as amended by this act, or section

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

44 of this act; and (C) transmitting any order issued by the Secretary of the State, pursuant to subsection (b) of section 9-3, as amended by this act.

Sec. 54. Subsection (a) of section 9-229b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

(a) Any regional council of governments organized under the provisions of sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive, may appoint a regional election advisor, who shall represent, consult with and act on behalf of such regional council of governments and any combination of regional councils of governments or member towns of regional councils of governments that may seek the assistance of such regional election advisor. A regional election advisor shall consult and coordinate with the Secretary of the State to provide such assistance in preparations for and operations of any election, primary or recanvass, or any audit conducted pursuant to section 9-320f, as amended by this act, or section 44 of this act.

Sec. 55. Section 9-320g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2027*):

Notwithstanding any provision of this title, the Secretary of the State, in consultation and coordination with The University of Connecticut, may authorize the use of electronic equipment for the purpose of conducting any audit required pursuant to section 9-320f, as amended by this act, [for any primary or general election held on or after January 1, 2016] or section 44 of this act, provided (1) the Secretary of the State prescribes specifications for (A) the testing, set-up and operation of such equipment, and (B) the training of election officials in the use of such equipment; and (2) the Secretary of the State and The University of Connecticut agree that such equipment is sufficient in quantity to accommodate the total number of audits to be conducted. Nothing in

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

this section shall preclude any candidate or elector from seeking additional remedies pursuant to chapter 149 as a result of any information revealed by such process.

Sec. 56. (*Effective from passage*) The Secretary of the State shall establish a pilot program for the conduct of risk-limiting audits at state elections in 2026. The Secretary shall randomly select three municipalities for participation in such pilot program, provided the Secretary shall select: (1) One municipality with a population of less than twenty thousand; (2) one municipality with a population of twenty thousand or greater, but less than ninety thousand; and (3) one municipality with a population of ninety thousand or greater. For the purposes of this section, "risk-limiting audit" has the same meaning as provided in section 44 of this act and "population" means the estimated number of people according to the most recent version of the State Register and Manual prepared pursuant to section 3-90 of the general statutes.

Sec. 57. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Election" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-1 of the general statutes;

(2) "Elections site" means any (A) polling place on the day of an election, primary or referendum, (B) location designated for the conduct of early voting during the period of early voting at an election or primary, (C) location designated for same-day election registration during the period of early voting at a regular election or on the day of a regular election, (D) central location designated for the counting of absentee ballots, early voting ballots or same-day election registration ballots at an election, primary or referendum, as applicable, (E) place where a recanvass is being conducted, or (F) drop box designated for the deposit of absentee ballots during the period beginning on the first day of issuance of absentee voting sets and ending at the close of the polls at an election, primary or referendum;

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(3) "Primary" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-372 of the general statutes; and

(4) "Referendum" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-1 of the general statutes.

(b) (1) No officer or agent of any organization or entity authorized by the federal government or by any state to use force against, search, detain or arrest individuals, and no person authorized by the federal government or by any state to order, bring, keep or have under such person's authority or control any such officer or agent, shall:

(A) Knowingly be within two hundred fifty feet of any elections site, unless (i) the Governor deems such force necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States or of the state, (ii) in the case of any such search, detention or arrest, such officer, agent or person (I) is acting in an official capacity, (II) has given notice to the Secretary of the State and the Attorney General not less than twenty-four hours prior to such search, detention or arrest, and (III) is authorized by a judicial warrant or judicial order of a court of competent jurisdiction to specifically conduct such search, detention or arrest within two hundred fifty feet of such elections site, and at the specific location at which such search, detention or arrest is to be conducted, provided such officer, agent or person is within such two hundred fifty feet only for as long as reasonably necessary to conduct such search, detention or arrest, (iii) exigent circumstances reasonably require the presence of any such officer, agent or person to protect against a serious threat to life or property, provided such officer, agent or person is within such two hundred fifty feet only for as long as reasonably necessary to protect against such threat, or (iv) the Secretary of the State or moderator (I) requests such force to suppress disorder, or (II) has given permission for such an officer, agent or person to be present and such permission has not been withdrawn;

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(B) Knowingly be within two hundred fifty feet of an elections site for the purpose of attempting to examine the qualifications to vote of any individual at such elections site;

(C) Knowingly loiter or remain within two hundred fifty feet of an elections site; or

(D) Engage in any conduct that would constitute a violation of 18 USC 592, 593 or 595, as amended from time to time.

(2) Nothing in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be construed to (A) prevent any officer, agent or person described in said subdivision, when off duty, from voting in accordance with the provisions of title 9 of the general statutes or otherwise engaging in protected political expression, or (B) prohibit any such officer, agent or person from (i) passing within two hundred fifty feet of an elections site only for as long as necessary to be within such two hundred fifty feet while on the way to a place or location other than such elections site, or (ii) residing within such two hundred fifty feet.

(3) Any person who violates any provision of subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be guilty of a class C felony and shall be disfranchised.

(c) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, no person shall wear any mask or other covering that obscures the face, head or identity of such person within two hundred fifty feet of any elections site.

(2) A person may wear such a mask or other covering within such two hundred fifty feet if the wearing of such mask or other covering (A) is reasonable given the weather conditions, provided such person complies with any request from the moderator to remove such mask or other covering, or (B) is medically necessary or of religious significance.

(3) Any person who wilfully violates the provisions of subdivision (1)

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

of this subsection, or refuses to comply with a request from the moderator to remove such person's mask or other covering, shall be guilty of a class D felony.

(d) (1) No person shall be required to present any form of identification within two hundred fifty feet of any elections site, unless otherwise required under state law.

(2) Any person who violates the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be guilty of a class D felony.

(3) Any action taken by an officer or agent described in subsection (b) of this section, pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii) of subdivision (1) of said subsection, shall not constitute a violation of subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(4) Nothing in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be construed to prevent any election, primary or referendum official from performing any duty under title 9 of the general statutes.

Sec. 58. Section 9-364a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) As used in this section, "election worker" means any municipal clerk, assistant municipal clerk, registrar of voters, deputy registrar of voters, election official described in section 9-258, as amended by this act, primary official described in section 9-436 or recanvass official described in section 9-311, as amended by this act, and "personal identifying information" has the same meaning as provided in section 53a-129a.

(b) Any person who influences or attempts to influence by force or threat the vote, or by force, threat, bribery or corrupt means [] the speech, of any other person at a primary, caucus, referendum, convention or election; any person who influences or attempts to

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

influence by force, threat or harassment any election worker in the performance of any duty under the provisions of this title related to election administration at a primary, referendum, election or recanvass; any person who wilfully and fraudulently suppresses or destroys any vote or ballot properly given or cast, whether so given or cast by mail, by deposit in a secure drop box or in person at a polling place or designated early voting or same-day election registration location, or who, in counting such votes or ballots, wilfully miscounts or misrepresents the number thereof; and any presiding or other officer of a primary, caucus or convention who wilfully announces the result of a ballot or vote of such primary, caucus or convention, untruly and wrongfully, shall be guilty of a class C felony.

(c) Any person who, with intent to harass, terrorize or alarm any election worker, or to improperly influence any election worker in the performance of any duty under this title related to election administration at a primary, referendum, election or recanvass, publicly discloses the personal identifying information of such election worker shall be guilty of a (1) class A misdemeanor for a first offense, and (2) class C felony for any subsequent offense.

(d) Any election worker described in subsection (b) or (c) of this section, as applicable, shall have a civil cause of action against the person who, with respect to such election worker, violated said subsection.

Sec. 59. Section 9-352 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) Any election official who, with intent to cause or permit any voting tabulator to fail to correctly register all votes cast thereon, (1) tampers with or disarranges [such tabulator] in any way such tabulator or any part or appliance thereof, or (2) causes such tabulator to be used or consents to its being used for voting at any election with knowledge

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

of the fact that the same is (A) not in order, or (B) not perfectly set and adjusted to correctly register all votes cast thereon, [or] shall be guilty of a class D felony.

(b) Any election official who, for the purpose of (1) defrauding or deceiving any elector, or [of] (2) causing it to (A) be doubtful for what candidate or candidates or proposition any vote is cast, or [causing it to] (B) appear upon such tabulator that votes cast for one candidate or proposition were cast for another candidate or proposition, removes, changes or mutilates any ballot shall be guilty of a class D felony.

(c) Any election official who provides to any third party that has not been authorized by the Secretary of the State any tabulator or any part or appliance thereof shall be guilty of a class D felony.

Sec. 60. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Any person who knowingly (1) tampers with, alters, destroys or unlawfully carries away a drop box designated for the deposit of absentee ballots; (2) changes or destroys a ballot after it has been deposited in such a drop box; (3) adds one or more ballots to those which have been lawfully deposited in such a drop box, whether before or after such ballots have been counted, by fraudulently depositing such additional ballot or ballots into such drop box in a manner not authorized by law and falsely claiming that such additional ballot or ballots were lawfully deposited into such drop box, with the intent to interrupt or invalidate an election, primary or referendum; or (4) adds one or more ballots to those which have been retrieved from such a drop box by fraudulently introducing such additional ballot or ballots while such ballots are being counted or recanvassed, with intent to affect the result of an election, primary or referendum or to enter any ballot into evidence at any hearing held pursuant to chapter 149 or 152 of the general statutes for the contest of such election, primary or referendum, shall be guilty of a class D felony.

Sec. 61. Subsection (a) of section 3-129g of the 2026 supplement to the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) The Attorney General may investigate, intervene in or bring a civil or administrative action in the name of the state, seeking injunctive or declaratory relief, damages, and any other relief that may be available under law, whenever any person is or has engaged in a practice or pattern of conduct, or has established a policy, that:

(1) Subjects, or causes to be subjected, other persons to the deprivation of any rights, privileges or immunities secured by the constitutions or laws of this state or the United States; or

(2) Interferes, or attempts to interfere, by threats, intimidation, [or] coercion or physical obstruction, with the exercise or enjoyment by other persons of any rights, privileges or immunities secured by the constitutions or laws of this state or the United States.

Sec. 62. Section 9-247 of the general statutes, as amended by section 73 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

The registrars of voters shall, before the commencement of the period of early voting at each election, cause test ballots to be inserted in each voting tabulator to ensure that each voting tabulator is prepared and read and cause each other voting system approved by the Secretary of the State for use in the election, including, but not limited to, voting devices equipped for individuals with disabilities that comply with the provisions of the Help America Vote Act, P.L. 107-25, as amended from time to time, to be put in order in every way and set and adjust the same so that it shall be ready for use in voting when delivered at the polling place [] or location designated for the conduct of early voting, [or location designated for the conduct of same-day election registration,] as applicable. Such registrars of voters shall cause each voting system to

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

be in order and set and adjusted, to be delivered at the polling place [,] or location designated for the conduct of early voting, [or location designated for the conduct of same-day election registration,] as applicable, together with all necessary furniture and appliances that go with the same, at the room where voting at such election is to take place, and to be tested and operable not later than one hour prior to the opening of the polling place [,] or location designated for the conduct of early voting, [or location designated for the conduct of same-day election registration,] as applicable.

Sec. 63. Section 9-192a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) (1) The Secretary of the State shall, in consultation with the advisory committee created pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, establish a program and criteria for the certification of registrars of voters and deputy registrars of voters.

(2) (A) All registrars taking such office on or before July 1, 2015, shall complete such program and satisfy such criteria for certification not later than July 1, 2017. Any registrar taking such office after July 1, 2015, shall complete such program and satisfy such criteria for certification [(A)] (i) in the case of a two-year term, not later than the conclusion of such term, and [(B)] (ii) in the case of a four-year term, not later than two years after the date of first holding such office, except [as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection] that any such registrar who completed the program and satisfied the criteria described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision for deputy registrars, and who subsequently became registrar in accordance with the provisions of section 9-192, shall be deemed to have completed the program and satisfied the criteria described in this subparagraph for the applicable term.

(B) All deputy registrars taking such office on or before July 1, 2026,

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

shall complete such program and satisfy such criteria for certification not later than July 1, 2028. Any deputy registrar taking such office after July 1, 2026, shall complete such program and satisfy such criteria for certification (i) in the case of a two-year term, not later than the conclusion of such term, and (ii) in the case of a four-year term, not later than two years after the date of first holding such office.

(C) Each municipality shall pay on behalf of such municipality's [registrar of voters the cost of completing such program and satisfying such] registrars of voters and deputy registrars of voters the costs of completing the applicable programs and satisfying the applicable criteria for certification under this subdivision.

[(2) If a deputy registrar becomes registrar, in accordance with the provisions of section 9-192, on or after the ninetieth day prior to a state election, as defined in section 9-1, such new registrar shall complete an abridged program prescribed by the Secretary of the State for a provisional certification. Completion of such abridged program and receipt of a provisional certification shall not be deemed to satisfy the requirements for certification described in subdivision (1) of this subsection.]

(3) Once certified, pursuant to subdivision [(1)] (2) of this subsection, each registrar and deputy registrar shall participate each year in not less than eight hours of training, not including any training described under subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of this section, in order to maintain such certification. Such training shall be as prescribed by the Secretary of the State and shall be conducted by [said] the Secretary or a third party approved by [said] the Secretary to conduct such training. On and after January 1, 2024, such training shall include procedures for the conduct of early voting at elections and primaries. Any registrar or deputy registrar who fails to satisfy such annual training requirement shall be directed by the Secretary of the State to take remedial measures prescribed by said Secretary.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(b) There is created an advisory committee for the purpose of establishing programs and procedures for training, examining and certifying registrars of voters, deputy registrars of voters and assistant registrars of voters, as described in section 9-192. The committee shall consist of six members, one of whom shall be from the office of the Secretary of the State, one of whom shall be from the State Elections Enforcement Commission, and four of whom shall be registrars of voters. The Secretary of the State shall appoint the registrars of voters, in consultation with the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut, or its successor organization. The committee members shall serve without pay. The Secretary of the State shall determine the length of the terms of the initial members, in accordance with the following: Two of such members shall serve for a one-year term; two of such members shall serve for a two-year term; and two of such members shall serve for a four-year term. Thereafter, all members shall serve for four-year terms. The committee shall select a chairperson, who shall be one of the registrars who is a member of the committee.

(c) The Secretary of the State, in consultation with the advisory committee created pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, shall adopt criteria for the training, examination and certification requirements of registrars and deputy registrars pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. In advising the Secretary of the State on the adoption of such criteria, the committee (1) shall consider whether the prescribed training leading to certification may, in part, be satisfied through participation in the required two conferences a year called by the Secretary of the State, pursuant to section 9-6, as amended by this act, for purposes of discussing the election laws, procedures or matters related to election laws and procedures, and (2) may recommend programs at one or more institutions of higher education that satisfy such criteria. Any [deputy or] assistant registrar of voters may participate in the course of training prescribed by the Secretary for certification as a certified Connecticut registrar of voters or deputy registrar of voters. The Secretary of the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

State shall certify any individual who completes such training and successfully completes any examination or examinations prescribed by the Secretary as a certified Connecticut registrar of voters or deputy registrar of voters, as applicable.

(d) The advisory committee created pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall also (1) develop a training program in election procedures for poll workers, and (2) develop an election law and procedures training program and guide for registrars, deputy registrars and assistant registrars. The training program developed under subdivision (2) of this subsection shall provide for training to be conducted by trained registrars or former registrars hired for such purpose by the Secretary of the State. The committee shall submit such training programs and training guide to the Secretary of the State, who shall approve or modify the programs and guide.

Sec. 64. Section 9-6 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Each registrar of voters, [or, in the absence of a registrar, the] each deputy registrar of voters [,] and each municipal clerk, [or, in the absence of a municipal clerk,] or one of the assistant municipal clerks in the absence of the municipal clerk, shall be compensated by the municipality which [the clerk] such official represents [, as provided for in this section,] for attending two conferences a year for [town clerks and] registrars of voters, deputy registrars of voters and municipal clerks which may be called by the Secretary of the State for the purpose of discussing the election laws, procedures or matters related thereto. Each such official shall be compensated by [the] such municipality at the rate of thirty-five dollars per day for attending each such conference, plus mileage to and from such conference at a rate per mile determined by [the] such municipality, but not less than twenty cents per mile, computed from the office of such official or, if [he] such official has no office, from [his] such official's home to the place where such conference

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

is being held.

Sec. 65. Section 9-388 of the general statutes, as amended by section 79 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Whenever a convention of a political party is held for the endorsement of candidates for nomination to state or district office, each candidate endorsed at such convention shall file with the Secretary of the State a certificate, signed by him, stating that he was endorsed by such convention, his name as he authorizes it to appear on the ballot, his full residence address and the title and district, if applicable, of the office for which he was endorsed. Such certificate shall be attested by either (1) the chairman or presiding officer, or (2) the secretary of such convention and shall be received by the Secretary of the State not later than four o'clock p.m. on the fourteenth day after the close of such convention. Such certificate shall either be mailed to the Secretary of the State by certified mail, return receipt requested, or delivered in person, in which case a receipt indicating the date and time of delivery shall be provided by the Secretary of the State to the person making delivery. If a certificate of a party's endorsement for a particular state or district office is not received by the Secretary of the State by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such party, for the purposes of sections 9-416 and 9-416a, shall be deemed to have made no endorsement of any candidate for such office. If applicable, the chairman of a party's state convention shall, forthwith upon the close of such convention, file with the Secretary of the State the names and full residence addresses of persons selected by such convention as the nominees of such party for electors of President and Vice-President of the United States in accordance with the provisions of section 9-175.

(b) (1) In the case of a timely filed certificate of a party's endorsement pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, which contains an error or omission that would operate to invalidate such endorsement, the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

candidate so certified or an individual authorized to act on behalf of such candidate may correct such error or omission by appearing in person at the office of the Secretary of the State, on a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, not later than four o'clock p.m. on the nineteenth day after the close of the state or district convention, as applicable, and amending such certificate to make such correction. If such candidate or individual does not appear to so amend such certificate by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such party, for the purposes of sections 9-416 and 9-416a, shall be deemed to have made no such endorsement.

(2) The Secretary of the State may, within the time period specified in subdivision (1) of this subsection, amend a timely filed certificate of a party's endorsement to correct any such error or omission, and shall keep a record of any such amendment made pursuant to this subdivision. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to require the Secretary to affirmatively attempt to identify any error or omission in any such certificate, except that, if the Secretary identifies such an error or omission, the Secretary shall use best efforts to notify the candidate so certified, an individual authorized to act on behalf of such candidate or the party that endorsed such candidate regarding such error or omission.

Sec. 66. Subsection (c) of section 9-391 of the general statutes, as amended by section 80 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(c) (1) Each endorsement of a candidate to run in a primary for the nomination of candidates for a municipal office to be voted upon at a state election shall be made under the provisions of section 9-390 not earlier than the eighty-fourth day or later than the seventy-seventh day preceding the day of such primary. Each certification to be filed under this subsection shall be received by the Secretary of the State not later than four o'clock p.m. on the fourteenth day after the close of the town

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

committee meeting, caucus or convention, as the case may be. If such a certificate of a party's endorsement is not received by the Secretary of the State by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such party, for the purposes of sections 9-417 and 9-418, shall be deemed to have neither made nor certified any endorsement of any candidate for such office. The candidate so endorsed for a municipal office to be voted upon at a state election, other than the office of justice of the peace, shall file with the Secretary of the State a certificate, signed by that candidate, stating that such candidate was so endorsed, the candidate's name as the candidate authorizes it to appear on the ballot, the candidate's full street address and the title and district of the office for which the candidate was endorsed. Such certificate may be filed by a candidate whose name appears upon the last-completed enrollment list of such party within the senatorial district within which the candidate is endorsed to run for nomination in the case of the municipal office of state senator, or the assembly district within which the candidate is endorsed to run for nomination in the case of the municipal office of state representative, or the municipality or political subdivision within which the candidate is to run for nomination for other municipal offices to be voted on at a state election. Such certificate shall be attested by either the chairperson or presiding officer or the secretary of the town committee, caucus or convention which made such endorsement. The endorsement of any candidate for the office of justice of the peace shall be certified to the clerk of the municipality by either the chairperson or presiding officer or the secretary of the town committee, caucus or convention, and shall contain the name and street address of each candidate so endorsed and the title of the office for which each such candidate is endorsed. Such certification shall be made on a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State or on such other form as may comply with the provisions of this subsection.

(2) (A) In the case of a timely filed certificate of a party's endorsement pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, which contains an error

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

or omission that would operate to invalidate such endorsement, the candidate so certified or an individual authorized to act on behalf of such candidate may correct such error or omission by appearing in person at the office of the Secretary of the State, on a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, not later than four o'clock p.m. on the nineteenth day after the close of the town committee meeting, caucus or convention, as applicable, and amending such certificate to make such correction. If such candidate or individual does not appear to so amend such certificate by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such party, for the purposes of sections 9-417 and 9-418, shall be deemed to have neither made nor certified such endorsement.

(B) The Secretary of the State may, within the time period specified in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, amend a timely filed certificate of a party's endorsement to correct any such error or omission, and shall keep a record of any such amendment made pursuant to this subparagraph. Nothing in this subparagraph shall be construed to require the Secretary to affirmatively attempt to identify any error or omission in any such certificate, except that, if the Secretary identifies such an error or omission, the Secretary shall use best efforts to notify the candidate so certified, an individual authorized to act on behalf of such candidate or the party that endorsed such candidate regarding such error or omission.

Sec. 67. Section 9-400 of the general statutes, as amended by section 81 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) A candidacy for nomination by a political party to a state office may be filed by or on behalf of any person whose name appears upon the last-completed enrollment list of such party in any municipality within the state and who has either (1) received at least fifteen per cent of the votes of the convention delegates present and voting on any roll-call vote taken on the endorsement or proposed endorsement of a

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

candidate for such state office, whether or not the party-endorsed candidate for such office received a unanimous vote on the last ballot, or (2) circulated a petition and obtained the signatures of at least two per cent of the enrolled members of such party in the state, in accordance with the provisions of sections 9-404a to 9-404c, inclusive. Candidacies described in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be filed by submitting to the Secretary of the State not later than four o'clock p.m. on the fourteenth day following the close of the state convention, a certificate, signed by such candidate and attested by either (A) the chairman or presiding officer, or (B) the secretary of the convention, that such candidate received at least fifteen per cent of such votes, and that such candidate consents to be a candidate in a primary of such party for such state office. Such certificate shall specify the candidate's name as the candidate authorizes it to appear on the ballot, the candidate's full residence address and the title of the office for which the candidacy is being filed. If such certificate for a state office is not received by the Secretary of the State by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such person, for the purposes of sections 9-416 and 9-416a, shall be deemed to have made no valid certification of candidacy for nomination by a political party to such state office. A single such certificate or petition for state office may be filed on behalf of two or more candidates for different state offices who consent to have their names appear on a single row of the primary ballot under subsection (b) of section 9-437. Candidacies described in subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be filed by submitting said petition not later than four o'clock p.m. on the sixty-third day preceding the day of the primary for such office to the registrar of voters of the towns in which the respective petition pages were circulated. Each registrar shall file each page of such petition with the Secretary of the State in accordance with the provisions of section 9-404c. A petition filed by or on behalf of a candidate for state office shall be invalid for such candidate if such candidate is certified as the party-endorsed candidate pursuant to section 9-388, as amended by [this act] public act 26-1 and this act, or as receiving at least fifteen per cent of the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

convention vote for such office pursuant to this subsection. Except as provided in section 9-416a, upon the expiration of the time period for party endorsement and circulation and tabulation of petitions and signatures, if any, if one or more candidacies for such state office have been filed pursuant to the provisions of this section, the Secretary of the State shall notify all town clerks and registrars of voters in accordance with the provisions of section 9-433, that a primary for such state office shall be held in each municipality in accordance with the provisions of section 9-415.

(b) A candidacy for nomination by a political party to a district office may be filed by or on behalf of any person whose name appears upon the last-completed enrollment list of such party within the district the person seeks to represent that is in the office of the Secretary of the State at the end of the last day prior to the convention for the party from which the person seeks nomination and who has either (1) received at least fifteen per cent of the votes of the convention delegates present and voting on any roll-call vote taken on the endorsement or proposed endorsement of a candidate for such district office, whether or not the party-endorsed candidate for such office received a unanimous vote on the last ballot, or (2) circulated a petition and obtained the signatures of at least two per cent of the enrolled members of such party in the district for the district office of representative in Congress, and at least five per cent of the enrolled members of such party in the district for the district offices of state senator, state representative and judge of probate, in accordance with the provisions of sections 9-404a to 9-404c, inclusive. Candidacies described in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be filed by submitting to the Secretary of the State not later than four o'clock p.m. on the fourteenth day following the close of the district convention, a certificate, signed by such candidate and attested by either (A) the chairman or presiding officer, or (B) the secretary of the convention, that such candidate received at least fifteen per cent of such votes, and that the candidate consents to be a candidate in a primary of such party for

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

such district office. Such certificate shall specify the candidate's name as the candidate authorizes it to appear on the ballot, the candidate's full residence address and the title and district of the office for which the candidacy is being filed. If such certificate for a district office is not received by the Secretary of the State by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such person, for the purposes of sections 9-416 and 9-416a, shall be deemed to have made no valid certification of candidacy for nomination by a political party to such district office. Candidacies described in subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be filed by submitting said petition not later than four o'clock p.m. on the sixty-third day preceding the day of the primary for such office to the registrar of voters of the towns in which the respective petition pages were circulated. Each registrar shall file each page of such petition with the Secretary in accordance with the provisions of section 9-404c. A petition may only be filed by or on behalf of a candidate for the district office of state senator, state representative or judge of probate who is not certified as the party-endorsed candidate pursuant to section 9-388, as amended by [this act] public act 26-1 and this act, or as receiving at least fifteen per cent of the convention vote for such office pursuant to this subsection. A petition filed by or on behalf of a candidate for the district office of representative in Congress shall be invalid if said candidate is certified as the party-endorsed candidate pursuant to section 9-388, as amended by [this act] public act 26-1 and this act, or as receiving at least fifteen per cent of the convention vote for such office pursuant to this subsection. Except as provided in section 9-416a, upon the expiration of the time period for party endorsement and circulation and tabulation of petitions and signatures, if any, if one or more candidacies for such district office have been filed pursuant to the provisions of this section, the Secretary of the State shall notify all town clerks within the district, in accordance with the provisions of section 9-433, that a primary for such district office shall be held in each municipality and each part of a municipality within the district in accordance with the provisions of section 9-415.

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

(c) (1) In the case of a timely filed certificate of candidacy for nomination by a political party pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section, which contains an error or omission that would operate to invalidate such candidacy for nomination, the person so certified or an agent of such person may correct such error or omission by appearing in person at the office of the Secretary of the State, on a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, not later than four o'clock p.m. on the nineteenth day after the close of the state or district convention, as applicable, and amending such certificate to make such correction, provided neither failure of such person to timely file such certificate pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section nor failure of the chairperson, presiding officer or secretary of the convention to attest such certificate shall be an error or omission that may be corrected pursuant to this subsection. If such person or agent does not appear to so amend such certificate by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such person, for the purposes of sections 9-416 and 9-416a, shall be deemed to have made no valid certification of candidacy for nomination by a political party. As used in this subsection, "agent" means an individual authorized to act on behalf of a person.

(2) The Secretary of the State may, within the time period specified in subdivision (1) of this subsection, amend a timely filed certificate of candidacy for nomination to correct any such error or omission, and shall keep a record of any such amendment made pursuant to this subdivision. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to require the Secretary to affirmatively attempt to identify any error or omission in any such certificate, except that, if the Secretary identifies such an error or omission, the Secretary shall use best efforts to notify the person so certified, an agent of such person or the party whose nomination is being sought by such candidate regarding such error or omission.

(d) For the purposes of this section, the number of enrolled members of a party shall be determined by the latest enrollment records in the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

office of the Secretary of the State prior to the earliest date that primary petitions were available. The names of electors on the inactive registry list compiled under section 9-35 shall not be counted for purposes of computing the number of petition signatures required under this section, as provided in section 9-35c.

(e) On the last day for filing primary petition candidacies in accordance with the provisions of this section, the office or office facilities of the registrars of voters shall open not later than one o'clock p.m., and remain open until at least four o'clock p.m., and such registrars or the deputy or assistant registrars shall be present.

Sec. 68. Section 9-452 of the general statutes, as amended by section 82 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) All minor parties nominating candidates for any elective office shall make such nominations and certify and file a list of such nominations, as required by this section, not later than the sixty-second day prior to the day of the election at which such candidates are to be voted for. A list of nominees in printed or typewritten form that includes each candidate's name as authorized by each candidate to appear on the ballot, the signature of each candidate, the full street address of each candidate and the title and district of the office for which each candidate is nominated shall be certified by the presiding officer of the committee, meeting or other authority making such nomination and shall be filed by such presiding officer with the Secretary of the State, in the case of any state, district or municipal office to be voted upon at a state election, or with the clerk of the municipality, in the case of any municipal office to be voted upon at a municipal election, not later than the sixty-second day prior to the day of the election. The registrars of voters of such municipality shall promptly verify and correct the names on any such list filed with him, or the names of nominees forwarded to the clerk of the municipality by the Secretary of the State, in accordance with the

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

registry list of such municipality and endorse the same as having been so verified and corrected. For the purposes of this section, a list of nominations shall be deemed to be filed when it is received by the Secretary of the State or clerk of the municipality, as appropriate. If such certificate of a party's nomination is not received by the Secretary of the State or clerk of the municipality, as appropriate, by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such party, for purposes of sections 9-460, 9-461 and 9-462, shall be deemed to have neither made nor certified any nomination of any candidate for such office. A candidacy for nomination by a minor party to a district or municipal office may be filed on behalf of any person whose name appears on the last-completed registry list of the district or municipality represented by such office, as the case may be. A candidacy for nomination by a minor party to a state office may be filed on behalf of any person whose name appears on the last-completed registry list of the state.

(b) (1) In the case of a timely filed certificate of nomination for any state, district or municipal office to be voted upon at a state election pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, which contains an error or omission that would operate to invalidate such nomination, the candidate so certified or an individual authorized to act on behalf of such candidate may correct such error or omission by appearing in person at the office of the Secretary of the State, on a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, not later than four o'clock p.m. on the fifty-seventh day prior to the day of the election and amending such certificate to make such correction, provided neither failure of the presiding officer of the committee, meeting or other authority to timely file such certificate pursuant to subsection (a) of this section nor failure of the candidate to sign such certificate shall be an error or omission that may be corrected pursuant to this subsection. If such candidate or individual does not appear to so amend such certificate by such time, such certificate shall be invalid and such party, for the purposes of sections 9-460, 9-461 and 9-462, shall be deemed to have neither made

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

nor certified any such nomination.

(2) The Secretary of the State may, within the time period specified in subdivision (1) of this subsection, amend a timely filed certificate of nomination to correct any such error or omission, and shall keep a record of any such amendment made pursuant to this subdivision. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to require the Secretary to affirmatively attempt to identify any error or omission in any such certificate, except that, if the Secretary identifies such an error or omission, the Secretary shall use best efforts to notify the candidate so certified, an individual authorized to act on behalf of such candidate or the party that nominated such candidate regarding such error or omission.

Sec. 69. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2027*) (a) As used in this section, "municipality", "elector", "election" and "referendum" have the same meanings as provided in section 9-1 of the general statutes; and "primary" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-372 of the general statutes.

(b) Whenever the registrars of voters of a municipality plan to use an electronic list to check any elector appearing at the polling place or location designated for the conduct of early voting at an election, primary or referendum held in such municipality, such registrars shall provide written notice of such planned use, not later than fourteen days prior to the commencement of the period of early voting at such election or primary and not later than fourteen days prior to such referendum, in a place readily accessible to the public at the town hall or municipal building of such municipality and in a conspicuous place on the Internet web site of such municipality. Except in the case of a device approved by the Secretary of the State pursuant to section 9-261c of the general statutes, any such electronic list shall not be used in lieu of the paper-based official checklist to be used at such election, primary or referendum and may only be used in addition to and in conjunction

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

with such paper-based official checklist.

Sec. 70. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to study absentee ballot access in certain cities and boroughs in the state that are unconsolidated with the towns within which such cities or boroughs are respectively located. The task force shall examine, for elections, primaries and referenda held in such unconsolidated cities and boroughs, (1) various forms and manners of application for absentee ballots by voters, and (2) various forms and manners of delivering absentee ballots to such voters, including, but not limited to, providing the ability to cast votes on the same ballot for offices and questions that pertain to both the unconsolidated city or borough and the town within which such city or borough is located.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall be the town clerk of a town within which all or part of an unconsolidated city or borough is located;

(2) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who shall be the clerk of an unconsolidated city or borough;

(3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives;

(4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be a registrar of voters of a town within which all or part of an unconsolidated city or borough is located;

(5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives;

(6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be a registrar of voters of a town within which all or part of an

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

unconsolidated city or borough is located;

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

(8) One appointed by the Secretary, who shall be an attorney with expertise in the election laws of the state; and

(9) The director of the Center for Voting Technology Research at The University of Connecticut, or the director's designee.

(c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (3) or (5) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

(d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(e) The Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee, shall be the chairperson of the task force. Such chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

(f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

(g) Not later than January 1, 2027, the task force shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2027, whichever is later.

Sec. 71. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) There is established a task force to study (1) efforts to achieve one hundred per cent voter participation in

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

this state by January 1, 2030, (2) means of enhancing civic engagement generally in this state, (3) experiences of jurisdictions that have enacted policies to require citizens to vote as a civic duty, (4) potential implementation options in pursuit of achieving such one hundred per cent voter participation goal, (5) needs of registrars of voters, town clerks and other municipal officials in administering elections in which one hundred per cent of voters participate, and (6) state and municipal budgetary resources that may be required to achieve such one hundred per cent voter participation goal.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

(2) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

(3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives;

(4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives;

(6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(7) The Secretary of the State, or the Secretary's designee; and

(8) Two appointed by the Governor.

(c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

(d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later than August 1, 2026. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

authority.

(e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than September 1, 2026.

(f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

(g) Not later than February 1, 2027, the task force shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations, including potential legislation to appropriate funds or provide other resources to municipalities for the purposes of increasing voter participation, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or February 1, 2027, whichever is later.

Sec. 72. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Subject to the provisions of title 9 of the general statutes and section 7-192a of the general statutes, any municipality may, within existing resources, establish a pilot program to promote the goal of achieving one hundred per cent voter participation in such municipality. Such pilot program may include efforts to enhance civic engagement, including, but not limited to, the development and conduct of a voter outreach and education campaign within such municipality.

Sec. 73. Sections 9-139, 9-159o and 9-192b of the general statutes are repealed. (*Effective from passage*)