



General Assembly

Amendment

February Session, 2026

LCO No. 6016



Offered by:

SEN. HARDING, 30th Dist.
SEN. MARTIN, 31st Dist.
SEN. SAMPSON, 16th Dist.
SEN. BERTHEL, 32nd Dist.

SEN. FAZIO, 36th Dist.
SEN. GORDON, 35th Dist.
SEN. PERILLO J., 21st Dist.

To: Subst. House Bill No. 5001

File No. 725

Cal. No. 460

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

1 Strike section 10 in its entirety and renumber the remaining sections
2 and internal references accordingly

3 After the last section, add the following and renumber sections and
4 internal references accordingly:

5 "Sec. 501. Section 9-140c of the general statutes is amended by adding
6 subsection (m) as follows (*Effective from passage*):

7 (NEW) (m) The Secretary of the State shall develop and provide to
8 the clerks and registrars of voters of each municipality a manual
9 regarding the custody and control of returned absentee ballots prior to
10 their counting on the day of a primary, election or referendum,
11 including the secure retention of such ballots after receipt under section

12 9-140b, the endorsement upon the outer envelope of the date and precise
13 time of receipt, the recording of the method of receipt, the sorting into
14 voting districts, the checking of names against the official checklist to be
15 used at such primary, election or referendum and the delivery of such
16 absentee ballots on the day of such primary, election or referendum, to
17 ensure uniformity in the handling of returned absentee ballots prior to
18 such counting on such day.

19 Sec. 502. Section 9-150a of the general statutes, as amended by section
20 90 of public act 26-1, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
21 thereof (*Effective from passage*):

22 (a) [The] Immediately after the opening of the polls on the day of an
23 election, primary or referendum, the absentee ballot counters shall
24 proceed to the central counting location or to the respective polling
25 places when counting is to take place pursuant to subsection (b) of
26 section 9-147a. [at the times designated by the registrars of voters.] In no
27 case shall the counting of absentee ballots occur prior to the day of the
28 election, primary or referendum for which such absentee ballots were
29 cast.

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

34 (c) Except with respect to ballots marked "Rejected" pursuant to
35 section 9-140c, as amended by this act, or other applicable law, the
36 counters shall remove the [inner envelopes] absentee ballots from the
37 [outer] return envelopes, shall note the total number of absentee ballots
38 received and shall report such total to the moderator. They shall
39 similarly note and separately so report the total numbers of presidential
40 ballots and overseas ballots received pursuant to sections 9-158a to 9-
41 158m, inclusive.

42 (d) (1) (A) If the statement on the [inner] return envelope has not been

43 signed as required by section 9-140a, as amended by this act, such
44 [inner] return envelope shall not be opened [or] nor shall the ballot be
45 removed therefrom. [, and such inner envelope shall be replaced in the
46 opened outer envelope which shall be marked "Rejected" and the reason
47 therefor endorsed thereon by the counters.] The return envelope shall
48 be marked "Rejected" and the reason for such rejection shall be endorsed
49 on such return envelope by the counters. The registrars of voters shall
50 use best efforts to notify each absentee ballot applicant whose ballot was
51 marked "Rejected" under this subdivision for the purpose of advising
52 that (A) such applicant's ballot has been rejected, and (B) such applicant
53 may still be able to vote in person on the day of the election, primary or
54 referendum.

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

62 (2) (A) If such statement is signed but the individual completing the
63 ballot is an individual described in subsection (a) of section 9-23r and
64 has not met the requirements of subsection (e) of section 9-23r, as
65 amended by this act, the counters shall replace the ballot in the opened
66 [inner envelope, replace the inner envelope in the opened outer] return
67 envelope and shall mark "Rejected as an Absentee Ballot" and endorse
68 the reason for such rejection on [the outer] such return envelope, and
69 the ballot shall be treated as a provisional ballot for federal offices only,
70 pursuant to sections 9-232i to 9-232o, inclusive. The registrars of voters
71 shall use best efforts to notify each absentee ballot applicant whose
72 ballot was marked "Rejected as an Absentee Ballot" under this
73 subdivision for the purpose of advising that (A) such applicant's ballot
74 has been rejected, and (B) such applicant may still be able to vote in
75 person on the day of the election, primary or referendum, provided such

76 applicant meets the requirements of subsection (d) of section 9-23r.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

128 (3) On an absentee ballot on which candidates' names are printed, a
129 vote shall be deemed cast only for each candidate whose name is
130 individually checked or validly written in, except as otherwise provided
131 in this subsection. If a party designation is circled, checked, underscored
132 or similarly marked in any manner, or written in, no vote shall be
133 deemed cast or cancelled for any candidate by virtue of such marking
134 or writing.

135 [(k)] (j) If the intent of an absentee voter is difficult to ascertain due to

136 uncertain, conflicting or incorrect ballot markings which are not clearly
 137 addressed in this section or in the procedure manual for counting
 138 absentee ballots provided by the Secretary of the State, the absentee
 139 ballot counters shall submit the ballot and their question to the
 140 moderator. They shall then count the ballot in accordance with the
 141 moderator's decision as to the voter's intent, if such intent is
 142 ascertainable. A ballot or part of a ballot on which the intent is
 143 determined by the moderator to be not ascertainable, shall not be
 144 counted. The moderator shall endorse on the ballot the question and
 145 [his] such moderator's decision.

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

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

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Sec. 501	<i>from passage</i>	9-140c(m)
Sec. 502	<i>from passage</i>	9-150a