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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS - REGISTRATIONS OF VOTERS

Introduced By: Senators Goldin, Lynch, Walaska, Conley, and Lombardi

Date Introduced: April 09, 2015

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(Secretary of State)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 17-9.1-10 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-9.1 entitled
2 "Registration of Voters" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **17-9.1-10. Additional method of registering.** -- (a) In addition to the methods for
4 registering to vote provided in §§ 17-9.1-7, 17-9.1-8, ~~and~~ 17-9.1-9, [and 17-9.1-34](#), whenever any
5 person who is or may be by the next election qualified to vote desires to register, that person may
6 appear before the local board of the city or town in which he or she has his or her residence, as
7 defined in § 17-1-3.1, or before the clerk or other duly authorized agent of the board, or before a
8 registrar appointed by the state board of elections, and shall furnish the information required of
9 him or her by this chapter and any information described in §§ 17-9.1-23 and 17-9.1-24 that the
10 registrant may wish to record, and after the information has been recorded on the registry card
11 furnished for that purpose, the person shall sign his or her name and certify to the truth of the
12 facts recorded in the appropriate spaces in the card; provided, whenever any person is unable to
13 sign his or her name because of physical incapacity or otherwise, he or she shall make his mark
14 "(X)", which shall be witnessed by the person receiving the registration.

15 (b) It shall be the duty of the local board or clerk or other duly authorized agent of the
16 board or registrar of the state board of elections to inform the person registering to vote that the
17 voter will be mailed an acknowledgement card advising the person of the disposition of the
18 registration and in the process verifying that the person resides at the address provided on the
19 registration form. The person shall also be advised that if the acknowledgement card is returned

1 as undeliverable, the person will be placed on the inactive list of voters pending the results of the
2 confirmation process described in § 17-9.1-26. Nothing contained in this section shall be deemed
3 to entitle a person to vote whose registration form has not been filed with the local board at least
4 thirty (30) days before an election.

5 SECTION 2. Chapter 17-9.1 of the General Laws entitled "Registration of Voters" is
6 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

7 **17-9.1-34. Electronic registration of voters.** -- (a) The secretary of state shall establish
8 and maintain a portal for electronic voter registration that must be administered by the secretary
9 of state. An applicant may use such portal to register to vote, or to update existing voter
10 registration information, provided:

11 (1) The applicant's information is verifiable in the manner described in subsection (b) of
12 this section;

13 (2) The applicant's signature is in a database described in subsection (b) of this section;
14 and

15 (3) Such signature may be imported into such system for electronic voter registration.

16 (b) Upon request of the secretary of state, a state agency, quasi-public agency or
17 municipality shall provide information to the secretary of state that the secretary of state deems
18 necessary to maintain the system for electronic voter registration, and the information so obtained
19 shall be used for no other purpose. The secretary of state may verify applicant information by
20 cross-referencing information submitted by applicants with data or information contained in any
21 state agency's, quasi-public agency's or municipality's database or a database administered by the
22 federal government, or any voter registration database of another state. The secretary of state shall
23 not use the information obtained from any such databases except to verify information submitted
24 by the applicant. The applicant's signature, if part of the data contained in the state agency's,
25 quasi-public agency's or municipality's database, shall be included as part of the applicant's
26 information contained in the system for electronic voter registration. No information viewed or
27 received by the secretary of state pursuant to this subsection may be transferred to, shared with or
28 otherwise conveyed to any other governmental or non-governmental entity for any reason except
29 for voter registration purposes or pursuant to a court order.

30 (c) The submission of an electronic application shall contain all of the information that is
31 required for an application under § 17-9.1-9, with the exception of the signature which shall be
32 obtained from another state agency, quasi-public agency, or municipality's database pursuant to
33 subsection (b) of this section.

34 (d) An applicant using the system shall mark the box associated with the following

1 statement included as part of the electronic application:

2 "By clicking on the box below, I swear or affirm all of the following under penalty of
3 perjury:

4 (1) I am the person whose name and identifying information is provided on this form, and
5 I desire to register to vote or update my voter registration information in the state of Rhode
6 Island.

7 (2) All of the information I have provided on this form is true and correct as of the date I
8 am submitting this form.

9 (3) I authorize a Rhode Island state agency, quasi-public agency, or municipality to
10 transmit, for voter registration purposes, to the secretary of state and my city's/town's board of
11 canvassers my signature that is on file with such state agency, quasi-public agency or
12 municipality. I understand that the secretary of state and my city/town's board of canvassers will
13 use such signature on this electronic voter registration application as if I had signed this form
14 personally."

15 (e) Upon approval of such application, the boards of canvassers shall send a confirmation
16 notice to the applicant.

17 (f) The secretary of state may enter into an agreement and exchange information or data
18 with any other state exclusively for the purposes of updating the statewide central voter register
19 and registering voters, provided such activities are performed under the supervision of the
20 secretary of state and the secretary of state enters into an agreement to protect the confidentiality
21 of such information or data. A Rhode Island state agency shall provide the secretary of state with
22 information or data to be used exclusively for voter registration purposes and shall advise the
23 secretary of state if such information or data is held confidential. The secretary of state shall not
24 use or transmit the information or data for any purpose except for voter registration purposes or
25 pursuant to a court order.

26 (g) To ensure full, equal and independent access to all voters with disabilities, any
27 Internet site and voter registration form created to register voters electronically or allow voters to
28 update their voter registration shall comply with all requirements under Title II of the Americans
29 with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12165, and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
30 (WCAG) 2.0 compliance level AA. Experts concerning disability and usability access to websites
31 shall be included in the development of any voter registration website and voter registration form,
32 and shall verify accessibility and usability before the website, or an updated version of the
33 website, is made available to the general public.

34 (h) The website and form shall be available in any language required by federal or state

1 [voting rights laws.](#)

2 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would require the secretary of state to establish a system to provide for the
2 electronic registration of voters. The act would limit the use or transfer of the information
3 supplied by the voter in registering.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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