

**2019 -- S 0589 SUBSTITUTE A AS AMENDED**

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LC001541/SUB A  
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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019**

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- VOTER REGISTRATION

Introduced By: Senator Mark P. McKenney

Date Introduced: March 14, 2019

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(Secretary of State)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Sections 17-9.1-23 and 17-9.1-24 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-9.1  
2 entitled "Registration of Voters" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **17-9.1-23. Party designation.**

4           (a) Whenever any person registers to vote, that person may designate his or her party  
5 affiliation, or that person may designate that he or she is not affiliated with any political party.  
6 The information shall be recorded on a form prescribed by the state board of elections.

7           (b) Any person who is already registered to vote and wishes to designate his or her party  
8 affiliation may do so by ~~voluntarily presenting himself or herself~~ submitting to that person's local  
9 board of canvassers ~~and a form provided by the state board~~ designating his or her party affiliation  
10 and certifying to the fact on the form furnished for that purpose.

11           (c) Whenever any person participates in a party primary, that act shall serve as  
12 identifying the person as being affiliated with the party in whose primary that person has  
13 participated and the local board shall record the affiliation on the appropriate form. For the  
14 purposes of this section, "participating in a party primary" does not include the circulation or  
15 signing of nomination papers.

16           **17-9.1-24. Change of designation.**

17           (a) Any person who has designated his or her party affiliation pursuant to § 17-9.1-23  
18 may change the designation on or before the ~~ninetieth (90th)~~ thirtieth day preceding any primary  
19 election for which the person is eligible. Whenever any person desires to change his or her party

1 designation, that person shall ~~appear before~~ submit to the local board of the city or town in which  
2 that person has his or her residence, as defined in § 17-1-3.1, or before the clerk or other duly  
3 authorized agent of the board, and shall change his or her party designation and, after the  
4 information has been recorded on the form furnished for that purpose, the person shall sign his or  
5 her name and certify to the truth of the facts recorded in the appropriate spaces in the form; ~~or the~~  
6 ~~person shall furnish an affidavit properly executed and signed by him or her to the board directing~~  
7 ~~the board to change the party designation. Whenever any person is unable to sign his or her name~~  
8 ~~because of physical incapacity or otherwise, that person shall make his or her mark "(X)", which~~  
9 ~~shall be witnessed by the person receiving the registration.~~ For the convenience of persons voting  
10 at a primary election, ~~affidavits~~ forms for changing party designation shall be available at all  
11 primary polling places. The presence of the ~~affidavits~~ forms at the primary polling place shall not  
12 be construed to allow a person to change his or her party designation within ~~ninety (90)~~ thirty  
13 (30) days preceding the primary election.

14 (b) ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, affidavits for~~  
15 ~~changing party designation which are executed by voters at polling places immediately after~~  
16 ~~voting in primary elections conducted in the city of Warwick in January, 2000, shall take effect~~  
17 ~~immediately.~~

18 (c) ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, affidavits for~~  
19 ~~changing party designation which are executed by voters at polling places immediately after~~  
20 ~~voting in primary elections conducted in senate district 20 comprising parts of the city of~~  
21 ~~Woonsocket and town of Cumberland in March, 2008, shall take effect immediately.~~

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- VOTER REGISTRATION

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1           This act would remove the requirement that any person who participates in a party  
2 primary be recorded with that party's affiliation. It would allow any person, other than the  
3 candidate, to change their party affiliation thirty (30) days rather than the current ninety (90) days  
4 before the primary. The board of elections shall also be required to provide a new form to be  
5 executed by voters desiring to switch their party affiliation.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

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