

2021 -- H 5496 SUBSTITUTE A

LC000922/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- CANVASSING THE LIST OF QUALIFIED ELECTORS --
HEALTH AND SAFETY -- VITAL RECORDS

Introduced By: Representatives Roberts, and Chippendale

Date Introduced: February 11, 2021

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 17-10-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-10 entitled "Canvassing
2 the Lists of Qualified Electors" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **17-10-1. Maintenance of registration -- Inactive file.**

4 (a) The local board or its duly authorized agent shall maintain the files of registration cards
5 in a condition that will correctly represent the registration of qualified voters at all times. It shall
6 continually purge the cards of voters no longer qualified to vote in the city or town. It shall promptly
7 record all changes of address, changes of name, and transfers and cancellations of registration.

8 (b) If a confirmation card has been mailed to a registered voter at an address outside of the
9 city or town of the voter's current registered address for voting purposes, or if the confirmation card
10 has been mailed to an address within the same city or town where the voter is registered, which
11 card was sent to confirm the voter's continuing residence within the city or town and not merely to
12 confirm information provided by or through the postal service concerning a change of address
13 within the city or town, and in both cases the voter has failed to respond to the confirmation card,
14 the voter shall be stricken from the voting list and the voter registration shall be canceled if the
15 voter has not voted or appeared to vote in an election during the period beginning on the date of
16 mailing of the confirmation card and ending on the date after the date of the second general election
17 that occurs after the date of mailing of the card. Provided, that the registration of any person shall
18 not be canceled during his or her service in the armed forces of the United States and during two

1 (2) years thereafter. A voter whose registration has been canceled shall not thereafter be eligible to
2 vote unless that voter shall again register in accordance with the provisions of this title and in
3 accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of this state. The local board shall notify the
4 secretary of state of any cancellation. The local board shall notify each voter whose registration has
5 been canceled by a notice addressed to the voter at the voter's last known address, and a
6 memorandum that the notice has been sent shall be maintained on file by the local board; provided,
7 that failure to give or receive the notice shall not affect the cancellation of the voter's registration.
8 The local board shall take affirmative action to purge the voter's name from its files of registration
9 cards.

10 (c) Using the central voter registration system, upon receipt of the ~~monthly~~ bi-monthly list
11 of individuals who have died from the office of vital statistics as prescribed by § 23-3-5, the
12 secretary of state shall identify all voter registrations that may be reflected on the list and so notify
13 electronically, the local board of canvassers of each applicable city or town. The local board, upon
14 receipt of the list of deceased persons from the secretary of state, or upon receipt of an affidavit of
15 death on forms prescribed by the secretary of state, shall promptly purge its files of registration
16 cards by removing the cards of each deceased elector and canceling the voter registration
17 information of the deceased elector from the central voter registration system.

18 (d) The local board shall maintain a separate list of all new registrations and all transfers
19 of registration which are received by the board within the thirty (30) day period prior to the close
20 of registration prior to each primary, regular, and special election. The list shall be maintained until
21 the time that the election is held.

22 SECTION 2. Section 23-3-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-3 entitled "Vital Records"
23 is hereby amended to read as follows:

24 **23-3-5. Duties of state registrar of vital records.**

25 (a) The state registrar of vital records shall:

26 (1) Administer and enforce this chapter and the rules and regulations issued under this
27 chapter, and issue instructions for the efficient administration of the statewide system of vital
28 records.

29 (2) Direct and supervise the statewide system of vital records and the division of vital
30 records and be custodian of its records.

31 (3) Direct, supervise, and control the activities of local registrars and the activities of town
32 and city clerks related to the operation of the vital records system.

33 (4) Prescribe, with approval of the state director of health, and distribute any forms that are
34 required by this chapter and the rules and regulations issued under this chapter.

1 (5) Prepare and publish annual reports of vital records of this state and any other reports
2 that may be required by the state director of health.

3 (6) Electronically transmit to the office of the secretary of state, on a ~~monthly~~ bi-monthly
4 basis, a list of any reported deaths of a person or persons eighteen (18) years of age or older, and
5 maintain a list of those deceased persons.

6 (7) Provide a copy on alkaline paper or an electronic record of each certificate of birth,
7 death, and marriage to the city or town clerk before the tenth (10th) day of the month after the
8 certificate is received by the division of vital records as authorized by regulations.

9 (8)(i) Flag birth certificates of missing children and perform all other acts and duties
10 required to be performed by him or her pursuant to chapter 28.8 of title 42.

11 (ii) Upon receipt of information pursuant to § 42-28.8-3, provide the local registrars of the
12 several cities and towns with that information.

13 (9) Direct, supervise, and control the transition from a paper-based system to an electronic
14 system.

15 (b) The state registrar of vital records, with the approval of the director of health, may
16 appoint a deputy state registrar and may delegate any functions and duties vested in him or her to
17 employees of the division of vital records and to local registrars that he or she deems necessary or
18 expedient.

19 SECTION 3. 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 -- CANVASSING THE LIST OF QUALIFIED ELECTORS --
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1 This act would change from monthly to bi-monthly, the time in which the state registrar of
2 vital records would be required to provide the secretary of state with the list of reported deaths.

3 This act would also change from monthly to bi-monthly, the time in which the secretary of state
4 would be required to provide each local board of canvassers with the list of deceased persons to be
5 removed from the voter registration list.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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