



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 90**

*February Session, 2012*

Substitute House Joint Resolution No. 2

*House of Representatives, March 22, 2012*

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. MORIN of the 28th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute joint resolution ought to be adopted.

***RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO GRANT INCREASED AUTHORITY TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.***

Resolved by this Assembly:

1 That the following be proposed as an amendment to the  
2 Constitution of the State, which, when approved and adopted in the  
3 manner provided by the Constitution, shall, to all intents and  
4 purposes, become a part thereof:

5 Section 1. Section 7 of article sixth of the Constitution is amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 The general assembly may provide by law for voting in the choice of  
8 any officer to be elected or upon any question to be voted on at an  
9 election by qualified voters of the state who [are unable to appear at  
10 the polling place on the day of election because of absence from the  
11 city or town of which they are inhabitants or because of sickness or  
12 physical disability or because the tenets of their religion forbid secular

13 activity] do not appear in person at a polling place on the day of an  
14 election.

15 Sec. 2. Section 4 of article fourth of the Constitution is amended to  
16 read as follows:

17 [At the meetings of the electors in the respective towns held  
18 quadrennially as herein provided for the election of state officers, the  
19 presiding officers shall receive the votes and shall count and declare  
20 the same in the presence of the electors.] The votes at the election of  
21 state officers shall be counted and declared in open meeting by the  
22 presiding officers in the several towns. The presiding officers shall  
23 make and certify duplicate lists of the persons voted for, and of the  
24 number of votes for each. One list shall be delivered [within three  
25 days] to the town clerk, and [within ten days after such meeting,] the  
26 other shall be delivered under seal to the secretary of the state. The  
27 votes so delivered shall be counted, canvassed and declared by the  
28 treasurer, secretary, and comptroller, within the month of November.  
29 The vote for treasurer shall be counted, canvassed and declared by the  
30 secretary and comptroller only; the vote for secretary shall be counted,  
31 canvassed and declared by the treasurer and comptroller only; and the  
32 vote for comptroller shall be counted, canvassed and declared by the  
33 treasurer and secretary only. A fair list of the persons and number of  
34 votes given for each, together with the returns of the presiding officers,  
35 shall be, by the treasurer, secretary and comptroller, made and laid  
36 before the general assembly, then next to be held, on the first day of  
37 the session thereof. In the election of governor, lieutenant-governor,  
38 secretary, treasurer, comptroller and attorney general, the person  
39 found upon the count by the treasurer, secretary and comptroller in  
40 the manner herein provided, to be made and announced before  
41 December fifteenth of the year of the election, to have received the  
42 greatest number of votes for each of such offices, respectively, shall be  
43 elected thereto; provided, if the election of any of them shall be  
44 contested as provided by statute, and if such a contest shall proceed to  
45 final judgment, the person found by the court to have received the  
46 greatest number of votes shall be elected. If two or more persons shall

47 be found upon the count of the treasurer, secretary and comptroller to  
48 have received an equal and the greatest number of votes for any of  
49 said offices, and the election is not contested, the general assembly on  
50 the second day of its session shall hold a joint convention of both  
51 houses, at which, without debate, a ballot shall be taken to choose such  
52 officer from those persons who received such a vote; and the balloting  
53 shall continue on that or subsequent days until one of such persons is  
54 chosen by a majority vote of those present and voting. The general  
55 assembly shall have power to enact laws regulating and prescribing  
56 the order and manner of voting for such officers. The general assembly  
57 shall by law prescribe the manner in which all questions concerning  
58 the election of a governor or lieutenant-governor shall be determined.

59 Sec. 3. Section 9 of article third of the Constitution is amended to  
60 read as follows:

61 At all elections for members of the general assembly the presiding  
62 officers in the several towns shall [receive the votes of the electors,  
63 and] count and declare [them] the votes of the electors in open  
64 meeting. The presiding officers shall make and certify duplicate lists of  
65 the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each. One list  
66 shall be delivered [within three days] to the town clerk, and [within  
67 ten days after such meeting,] the other shall be delivered under seal to  
68 the secretary of the state.

69 RESOLVED: That the foregoing proposed amendment to the  
70 Constitution be continued to the next session of the General Assembly  
71 elected at the general election to be held on November 6, 2012, and  
72 published with the laws passed at the present session, or be presented  
73 to the electors at the general election to be held on November 6, 2012,  
74 whichever the case may be, according to article sixth of the  
75 amendments to the Constitution. The designation of said proposed  
76 amendment to be used on ballots at such election shall be "Shall the  
77 Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning  
78 absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a  
79 polling place on the day of an election?"

**GAE**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 13 \$	FY 14 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	\$5,000	None

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

This resolution proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to allow the General Assembly greater authority to change absentee voting laws. The Secretary of the State will incur a cost of \$5,000 (for the November 2012 general election) for providing posters with the proposed constitutional amendment questions and explanation to each polling place.

This cost will cover the printing and mailing of the posters. Since all materials required for placing a constitutional amendment on the ballot are supplied by the State, no costs will be incurred by municipalities.

**The Out Years**

The resolution pertains to the November 2012 general election and therefore has no fiscal impact on the out years.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHJ 2****RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO GRANT INCREASED AUTHORITY TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.****SUMMARY:**

This resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to (1) eliminate the requirement for electors to gather on Election Day to cast votes for state officers and General Assembly members and (2) remove restrictions on absentee voting.

The resolution also lifts the constitutional deadlines by which the lists of results (i.e., moderator's returns) for state officers and General Assembly members must be delivered to town clerks and the secretary of the state (within three and 10 days after an election, respectively) (see BACKGROUND).

The ballot designation to be used when the amendment is presented at the general election is: "Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to remove restrictions concerning absentee ballots and to permit a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on the day of an election?"

Currently, the state constitution sets the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in specified years as the day of election for legislative and statewide offices (Article 3 § 8 and Article 4 § 1). With one exception, it requires electors to gather at a meeting on this day to elect state officers (Article 4 § 2). The exception authorizes the General Assembly to pass a law allowing electors to cast their vote by absentee ballot if they will be out of town, sick, or physically disabled or the tenets of their religion prohibits secular activity on Election Day

(Article 6 § 7). The General Assembly exercised this authority and passed CGS § 9-135.

EFFECTIVE DATE: If the resolution passes by at least three-fourths of the membership of each house of the General Assembly, it will be placed on the 2012 general election ballot. If it passes by a majority of the membership of each house but less than three-fourths, it will be referred to the 2013 session of the legislature. If it passes in that session by a majority of each house, it will appear on the 2014 general election ballot. If a majority of those voting in the general election approves the amendment, it will become part of the state constitution.

**BACKGROUND**

***Moderator Returns***

The statutes require moderators to deliver their returns:

1. by electronic means no later than midnight on Election Day (in which case they must also deliver a paper copy no later than three days after an election);
2. by hand to the secretary of the state no later than 6: 00 pm the day after an election; or
3. by hand to the State Police by 4: 00 pm the day after an election, who must then deliver them by hand to the secretary no later than 6: 00 pm the same day.

Moderators must deliver the returns to their respective town clerks on or before the day after an election (CGS § 9-314).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections

Joint Favorable Substitute  
Yea 11 Nay 4