



BALLOT QUESTION AND EXPLANATORY TEXT FOR PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

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SUMMARY

The law requires the Office of Legislative Research to prepare a concise explanatory text describing the content and purpose of a proposed constitutional amendment that will be voted on by electors at a general election. The text is subject to approval by the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee—the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance over constitutional amendments. Once approved, the secretary of the state must print and send the explanatory text, together with the language of the proposed amendment, to town clerks and registrar of voters in each town in sufficient supply for public distribution. The secretary must also print the text on posters, of a size she determines, and mail each town enough so that registrars can display at least three in each polling place (CGS § [2-30a](#)).

During the 2013 legislative session, the General Assembly passed [HJ 36](#) (Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Grant Increased Authority to the General Assembly Regarding Election Administration), requiring it to be placed on the ballot for the November 4, 2014 general election.

BALLOT QUESTION

The resolution specifies the following wording for the ballot question:

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?

EXPLANATORY TEXT

On August 13, 2014, the GAE Committee met and approved the following explanatory text:

If this constitutional amendment passes, it would give the General Assembly greater authority to pass a law allowing voters to cast their ballots without having to (1) appear at their polling place on election day or (2) provide a reason for voting by absentee ballot.

If the amendment passes, it would also eliminate the constitutional deadlines by which election moderators must submit their election returns to their town clerks and the secretary of the state (i.e., within 3 and 10 days after an election, respectively). The Connecticut General Statutes set earlier deadlines by which they must submit these returns (e.g., midnight on election day to the secretary of the state).

Further Explanation

The state constitution contains provisions regarding the administration of elections in Connecticut, including requiring voters to cast their ballots at their polling place on election day, unless they qualify to vote by absentee ballot. Under the constitution, voters may qualify for an absentee ballot if they will be out of town, are sick or have a physical disability, or the tenets of their religion prohibit secular activity on election day. Because these restrictions are in the constitution, the General Assembly does not currently have the authority to pass a law that changes them. The constitutional amendment would eliminate these restrictions.

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