
OLR Bill Analysis

SJ 31

RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW EARLY VOTING.

SUMMARY

This resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to (1) eliminate the requirement that electors gather on election day to vote for state officers and state legislators and (2) authorize the General Assembly to provide by law for an in-person, early voting period.

Under the amendment, the early voting period must occur during the 14 days before an election and include at least two and no more than five early voting days, and at least eight hours during each early voting day. In addition, electors may vote early only in the municipality where they reside.

The amendment also lifts the constitutional deadlines by which the lists of results (i.e., moderator returns) for state officers and state legislators must be delivered to town clerks and the secretary of the state (within three and 10 days after an election, respectively). State statutes set earlier deadlines by which they must submit these returns (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 allow the General Assembly to provide opportunities for early voting in person during the fourteen days prior to the day of an election?"

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 2018 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 2019 session of the legislature. If it passes in that session

by a majority of each house, it will appear on the 2020 general election ballot. If a majority of those voting on the amendment in the general election approves it, the amendment will become part of the state constitution.

BACKGROUND

Moderator Returns

The statutes require moderators to do the following:

1. prepare a preliminary list of results and immediately transmit it to the secretary of the state by midnight on election day,
2. electronically transmit a “duplicate list of the votes” to the secretary no later than 48 hours after the polls close,
3. deliver a sealed copy of the duplicate list to the secretary no later than the third day after the election, and
4. provide a copy of the duplicate list to the town clerk (CGS § 9-314).

Related Constitutional Amendment

HJ 28, reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee, contains the same provisions.

Split Committee (Pursuant to Joint Rule 5(c))

A motion for a favorable report on the same resolution by the Senate GAE Committee failed by a 2-2 vote.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

House Favorable

Yea 7 Nay 6 (03/23/2018)