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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **SJ 27**

#### ***RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ALLOWING FOR NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to remove the constitution's current restrictions on absentee voting. Under these restrictions, the General Assembly may pass a law allowing electors to cast their votes by absentee ballot only if they will be out of town, they are sick or have a physical disability, or the tenets of their religion prohibit secular activity on election day (Article VI, § 7). The General Assembly exercised this authority and passed laws codified at CGS § 9-135 (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 permit the General Assembly to allow any elector of the state to cast an absentee ballot at an election without satisfying a specified reason for such elector's absence from the polling place on the day of such 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 2020 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 2021 session of the legislature. If it passes in that session by a majority of each house, it will appear on the 2022 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**

##### ***Absentee Voting***

CGS § 9-135 permits qualified electors to vote by absentee ballot if:

1. they are absent from the municipality in which they reside during all hours of voting;
2. they are ill or have a physical disability;
3. the tenets of their religion forbid secular activity on the day of the primary, election, or referendum;
4. they are in active service in the U.S. Armed Forces; or
5. they are primary, election, or referendum officials outside of their voting district, and their duties will keep them away during all hours of voting.

***Related Constitutional Amendment***

sHJ 161, reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, proposes a constitutional amendment to require an early voting period and allow for no-excuse absentee voting.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 11    Nay 5    (03/20/2019)