



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 459

January Session, 2019

Senate Joint Resolution No. 27

Senate, April 4, 2019

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through SEN. FLEXER of the 29th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the joint resolution ought to be adopted.

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

Resolved by this Assembly:

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

7 Sec. 7. The general assembly may provide by law for voting in the
8 choice of any officer to be elected or upon any question to be voted on
9 at an election by qualified voters of the state who [are unable to appear
10 at 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 at the polling place on the day of election.

14 RESOLVED: That the foregoing proposed amendment to the
15 Constitution be continued to the next session of the General Assembly
16 elected at the general election to be held on November 3, 2020, and
17 published with the laws passed at the present session, or be presented
18 to the electors at the general election to be held on November 3, 2020,
19 whichever the case may be, according to article sixth of the
20 amendments to the Constitution. The designation of said proposed
21 amendment to be used on the ballots at such election shall be "Shall the
22 Constitution of the State be amended to permit the General Assembly
23 to allow any elector of the state to cast an absentee ballot at an election
24 without satisfying a specified reason for such elector's absence from
25 the polling place on the day of such election?"

GAE *Joint Favorable*

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 20 \$	FY 21 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	None	5,000

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The resolution proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to allow any elector 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.

The Secretary of the State is anticipated to incur a cost of \$5,000 in FY 21 (for the November 2020 election) for providing posters with the proposed constitutional amendment question and explanation to each polling place in every municipality.

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, and the vote will occur on the same day as a regularly scheduled statewide election, no costs will be incurred by municipalities.

The Out Years

The cost identified above is one-time. However, the FY 21 cost may be shifted into FY 23 pursuant to the requirements of the constitutional amendment process.

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)