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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **HB 6579**

#### ***AN ACT REVISING CERTAIN STATUTES CONCERNING VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes various changes affecting election administration. Principally, it does the following:

1. allows registrars of voters to provide notice of voter registration sessions on their municipality's website as an alternative to a newspaper;
2. repeals obsolete provisions concerning municipal boards for admission of electors;
3. eliminates a requirement that registrars meet on a specific day before a regular election to complete the registry list of all electors who may vote at the election, and instead requires them to complete the list before the election;
4. eliminates requirements that (a) the advisory committee tasked with establishing training programs for registrars of voters develop an election law and procedures training program and guide for registrars and their assistants and deputies and (b) registrars or their assistants or deputies annually receive at least 10 hours of training through that program; and
5. requires moderators to file moderator returns electronically with the secretary of the state and in hard copy with the town clerk.

The bill also allows registrars of voters to appoint electors from any Connecticut municipality to serve as voting tabulator tenders. Under current law, registrars may appoint electors only from their

municipality (§ 13).

Lastly, the bill makes minor, technical, and conforming changes (§§ 8 & 9).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

### **§ 1 — NOTICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION SESSION**

The bill gives registrars of voters in each municipality the option of providing notice of the time and place of voter registration sessions on their municipal website. Under current law, they must notice these sessions in a newspaper published or circulated in the municipality. Instead, the bill allows either option. In either case, the notice must appear from five to 15 days before the session and it need not be in the form of a legal advertisement.

### **§§ 2-5 & 18 — BOARDS FOR ADMISSION OF ELECTORS**

The bill repeals obsolete references to municipal boards for admission of electors. Current law requires that these boards, among other things, adjudicate appeals made by someone who is denied admission as an elector (i.e., ability to vote) by a registrar of voters. However, in practice municipalities no longer use these boards. Rather, someone aggrieved by a registrar's admission decision may file a complaint with the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC).

### **§§ 6 & 7 — PRELIMINARY VOTER REGISTRY LIST**

The bill eliminates the requirement that registrars of voters meet on the Tuesday of the fifth week before a regular election to complete a correct registry list of electors entitled to vote in the election (i.e., those on both the active and inactive voter registry lists). It instead requires them to complete the list before the election and makes conforming changes (e.g., repealing the requirement that the registrars notice the session at least five days in advance). In practice, registrars maintain this list on a continual basis through the statewide centralized voter registration system.

### **§§ 10-12 & 18 — REGISTRAR TRAINING**

The bill eliminates a requirement that registrars of voters annually take, or designate their deputies or assistants to take, at least 10 instruction hours under an election law and procedures training program developed by the six-member advisory committee that trains and certifies them. It similarly eliminates the requirement that the committee develop the program and a related guide and submit them to the secretary of the state for approval.

Under existing law unchanged by the bill, registrars of voters must (1) be certified through a program developed by the secretary in consultation with the advisory committee and (2) annually complete at least eight hours of training that are separate from the 10-hour training program eliminated by the bill. The advisory committee consists of representatives of the secretary of the state and SEEC, and four registrars of voters whom the secretary appoints in consultation with the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut (CGS § 9-192a).

#### **§§ 14-17— FILING MODERATOR RETURNS**

By law, moderators must file a moderator return with the secretary of the state and their town clerk after a primary, election, referendum, or recanvass. Similarly, they must file (1) a corrected return for federal offices showing provisional ballots after a recanvass and (2) for municipalities divided into voting districts, an amended return after meeting with the town clerk and registrars of voters if errors were identified in the election night returns.

The bill generally requires moderators to file these returns electronically with the secretary of the state and in hard copy with the town clerk (in some cases, the hard copy must also be filed with the registrars). Under existing law, moderators must already file the preliminary and duplicate list of returns electronically with the secretary of the state.

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (04/05/2021)