

Voter Identification Requirements in Connecticut

By: Kristin Sullivan, Chief Analyst

March 1, 2021 | 2021-R-0071

Issue

Summarize identification (ID) requirements in Connecticut for registering to vote and for voting in person. Indicate whether the state has ever had a strict photo ID requirement for voting in person.

This report updates OLR Report [2008-R-0301](#).

Summary

Connecticut requires voters to present an acceptable form of ID, but not photo ID, either when they register to vote or when they vote in a primary, election, or referendum. (According to a search conducted by the Legislative Library, the state has never had a strict photo ID requirement for voting in person.) The requirement to present ID when voting depends on whether the voter presented ID when registering to vote.

Voters who present an acceptable form of ID when registering to vote are not required to show ID when voting. However, those who do not show ID at the polling place must sign a form under penalty of false statement affirming their identify (i.e., Form ED-681, "Signatures of Electors Who Did No Present ID"). Those who do show ID at the polling place must show a Social Security card or other preprinted form of ID that has the voter's name together with his or her address, signature, or photograph ([CGS § 9-261\(a\)](#)).

Voters who do not present an acceptable form ID when registering to vote must show it when voting in person for the first time in a primary or election with federal candidates on the ballot or alternatively, apply for a provisional ballot. Acceptable forms of ID include certain documents with the voter's name and address (e.g., bank statements or utility bills) or valid photo IDs with the voter's name and address. Only certain voters who register to vote by mail fall into this category (see below) ([CGS §§ 9-23r](#) and [9-261\(a\)](#)).

ID Requirements for Registering to Vote

Connecticut law establishes three methods by which a person may register to vote: in person, including through election day registration (EDR); by mail; or online ([CGS §§ 9-19j\(d\), 9-19k, 9-20, 9-23g](#), and [9-23r](#)). For all three methods, applicants must affirm under penalty of perjury that they are eligible to become an elector. By law, perjury is a class D felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both ([CGS § 53a-156](#)).

In-Person Registrations

State law requires people who register to vote in person to fill out a secretary of the state-prescribed form that includes certain identifying information, such as address, birthdate, and an affirmation of U.S. citizenship. In addition, in-person applicants must present the admitting official with either a birth certificate, driver's license, or Social Security card ([CGS § 9-20](#)).

These requirements similarly apply to applicants who register in person through EDR, except that a student at a higher education institution who registers through EDR may instead present a photo ID issued by the institution. Additionally, EDR applicants must submit proof of their residential address. Acceptable forms of proof include a learner's permit for driving, a utility bill, or a higher education institution's registration or fee statement ([CGS § 9-19j\(d\)](#)).

Mail-In Registrations

People may register to vote by mailing a secretary of the state-prescribed form to the registrars of voters in the municipality where they reside. As with in-person registrations, the mail-in form includes certain identifying information, such as address, birthdate, and an affirmation of U.S. citizenship. It also requires applicants to provide their Connecticut driver's license number or, if none, the last four digits of their Social Security number (SSN) ([CGS §§ 9-23g](#) and [9-23h](#)).

People who register to vote for the first time in Connecticut by mail after January 1, 2003, have the option of submitting supplemental information with their mail-in registrations. Specifically, under both state law and the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) ([P.L. 107-252](#)), these applicants may submit any of the following:

1. a copy of a current and valid photo ID;
2. a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government document that shows the voter's name and address;
3. a valid Connecticut driver's license number; or
4. the last four digits of their SSN.

If applicants include one of the above forms of supplemental ID, or submit a driver's license number or SSN that registrars of voters can match with an existing Connecticut record, then they are not required to produce ID at the polls. If applicants do not include supplemental information, admitting officials put a “mark” next to their names on the official registry list, signaling that they must produce it at the polls if federal candidates are on the ballot, or cast a provisional ballot ([CGS § 9-23r](#)) (see BACKGROUND).

Online Registrations

State law requires the secretary of the state to maintain an online voter registration system. In addition to new registrations, the system permits registered voters to apply to make registration changes online. Applicants may register to vote through the online voter registration system only if their (1) registration information is verifiable and (2) signature is in a federal or state database and may be imported into the system ([CGS § 9-19k](#)).

By law, online applicants must provide the same information that is required for in-person registrants. In practice and according to the Office of the Secretary of the State, the online system interacts only with the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Applicants using the online system must have a DMV record, including a license number and signature on file with the agency, which the online system obtains to verify identification.

ID Requirement for Voting in Person

When voting in person, most voters must either present an acceptable form of ID or sign Form ED-681. Acceptable ID forms are (1) a Social Security card or (2) any preprinted ID card that has the voter's name and his or her address, signature, or photograph. Voters sign Form ED-681, "Signatures of Electors Who Did Not Present ID," under penalty of false statement to attest to their identity ([CGS § 9-261\(a\)](#)). By law, false statement is a class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$2,000, or both ([CGS § 53a-157b](#)).

However, as described above, voters who register for the first time in Connecticut on or after January 1, 2003, by mail without providing supplemental information, must provide it when voting for the first time in a primary or election with federal candidates on the ballot. Under these circumstances, voters are ineligible to obtain a regular ballot by signing Form ED-681; instead, they may apply for a provisional ballot ([CGS § 9-23r](#)). (For a municipal primary, election, or referendum, however, voters who register for the first time in Connecticut on or after January 1, 2003, by mail without providing supplemental information may sign Form ED-681 to affirm their identify.)

Table 1 below summarizes Connecticut's ID requirements for in-person voting.

Table 1: ID Requirements for In-Person Voting

Type of Voter	ID Requirement for In-Person Voting	Alternative to ID
<p>First-time voter who meets the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. registered by mail on or after January 1, 2003, 2. voting for the first time in Connecticut in a primary or election with federal candidates on the ballot, and 3. has a "mark" next to his or her name on the official registry list (due to not providing supplemental information when registering) 	<p>Copy of a current and valid photo ID that shows the voter's name and address</p> <p>or</p> <p>Copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government document that shows the voter's name and address</p>	<p>Provisional ballot</p>
<p>All other voters (i.e., those who registered in-person, online, or through the mail and do not have a mark beside their names or are voting in a municipal primary, election, or referendum)</p>	<p>Social security card</p> <p>or</p> <p>Any pre-printed form of ID showing the voter's name together with his or her (1) address, (2) signature, or (3) photograph</p>	<p>Form ED-681</p>

Background

Provisional Ballot Eligibility and Procedures

Election officials issue provisional ballots under three circumstances and only when a candidate for federal office is on the ballot. Provisional ballots do not include candidates for state or local elections.

Specifically, people may apply for and receive a provisional ballot when they:

1. appear at the polling place claiming to be eligible to vote, but their name does not appear on the official registry list and the registrars determine that it cannot be immediately restored or transferred from another polling place;
2. are the subject of a challenge, and the moderator decides they are not eligible to vote; or

3. registered by mail without the necessary identification and appear at a polling place or apply for an absentee ballot for the first time after registering without proper identification ([CGS §§ 9-23r](#) and [9-232l](#)).

To vote by provisional ballot, people must fill out an application under penalty of false statement attesting to their eligibility and current standing as an elector in the town where the polling place is located. Registrars have six days after a primary or general election to authenticate the information on each provisional ballot. The ballots are kept separate and counted only after the registrars verify eligibility ([CGS §§ 9-232j](#) to [9-232o](#)).

KS:kl