



PA 22-2—sHB 5262

Government Administration and Elections Committee

AN ACT REVISING CERTAIN ABSENTEE VOTING ELIGIBILITY STATUTES

SUMMARY: This act expands two of the six statutory reasons for which qualified voters (i.e., electors and people eligible to vote in a referendum) may vote by absentee ballot in an election, primary, or referendum (see BACKGROUND). Under the act, qualified voters may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at their polling place because of (1) sickness, rather than because of their own illness, or (2) physical disability, rather than because of their own physical disability.

Additionally, the act authorizes qualified voters to vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at their polling place because of absence from the town of their voting residence. Prior law authorized them to vote absentee for this reason only if they were absent during all hours of voting.

The act also modifies to whom each of the six statutory reasons for voting by absentee ballot applies. Previously, the reasons applied to qualified voters who were unable to appear at their polling place during the hours of voting. Under the act, they apply to qualified voters who are unable to do so during the day of the election, primary, or referendum.

The act requires that absentee ballots be updated to reflect the above changes. Specifically, the statement printed on the face of the absentee ballots' inner envelope must show the revised reasons electors may vote absentee. By law, absentee voters must sign the statement under penalties of false statement in absentee balloting, which is a class D felony (CGS § 9-359a; see [Table on Penalties](#)).

Lastly, the act makes technical changes, including removing obsolete provisions concerning absentee voting because of the COVID-19 sickness in the 2020 state election and any election, primary, or referendum from June 23, 2021, through November 2, 2021.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Permitted Reasons Under the Constitution for Voting by Absentee Ballot

The state constitution authorizes the General Assembly to pass a law allowing eligible voters to cast their votes by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at a polling place on election day because of (1) absence from their city or town, (2) sickness or physical disability, or (3) the tenets of their religion prohibiting secular activity (Conn. Const. Art. VI, § 7). The General Assembly exercised this authority and passed laws codified at CGS § 9-135.