



2024 Acts Affecting Town Clerks and Elections

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts) significantly affecting town clerks and elections enacted during the 2024 regular legislative session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Municipalities, are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or [General Assembly's website](#).

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Absentee Ballots

Drop Box Checking and Recording

A new law requires municipalities, by July 1, 2025, to install video recording devices to record every absentee ballot drop box. The recording must (1) begin the first day absentee ballots are issued for an election or primary, (2) continue until the last ballot retrieval by the town clerk, and (3) include evidence of the date and time. Additionally, these recordings must be made available to the public no later than five days after the last ballot retrieval. The new law also specifies that clerks must check the drop boxes at the close of the polls for every election, primary, or referendum and pick up the absentee ballots inside ([PA 24-148](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

Forms and Requests

Under a new law, the secretary of the state must clearly and conspicuously note, on an absentee ballot application, the year it is valid. It also prohibits (1) town clerks from providing or accepting ballots without the applicable year noted and (2) any person from distributing or using an application without the current year noted.

The act also prohibits town clerks from giving a person five or more ballot applications in total for an election, primary, or referendum if requested at least 90 days before absentee ballots are issued for that election contest ([PA 24-148](#), §§ 8 & 9, effective January 1, 2025).

Methods of Receipt

In 2024, the legislature passed a law requiring town clerks to note on the outer envelope of an absentee ballot how the ballot was returned to the clerk: (1) through a mail service (e.g., the U.S. Postal Service); (2) to a drop box, and if so, the box's location; (3) in-person by the voter themselves; or (4) in-person by a voter's designee or immediate family member. Clerks must also report to the secretary of the state on the total number of absentee ballots returned and a count of ballots returned by each method described above ([PA 24-148](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2024).

Nursing Home Patients

As already allowed for hospital patients, a new law allows nursing home patients to (1) apply for an absentee ballot within the six-day period before the polls close at an election, primary, or referendum and (2) appoint a designee who will bring them their ballot ([PA 24-34](#) and [PA 24-148](#), § 5, effective upon passage).

Permanent Absentee Ballot Status

By law, registrars must annually send a written notice to each voter with permanent absentee ballot status to determine if they still reside at the address provided. A new law eliminates the requirement for town clerks to remove a voter's permanent status if he or she fails to respond to the request. A voter's status must still be removed if the notice is returned as undeliverable ([PA 24-148](#), § 16, effective upon passage).

Receipt of Multiple Absentee Ballots

Under prior law, if a town clerk received multiple absentee ballots from the same voter, the ballot bearing the latest postmark or the latest serial number (depending on the circumstance) had to be counted and all other ballots rejected. Instead, under a new act, the absentee ballot last received by the clerk must be counted if none has been counted already and all others must be rejected ([PA 24-148](#), §§ 3 & 4, effective upon passage).

Requests for Additional Absentee Ballots

A new law specifies that a voter must personally request a subsequent absentee ballot either (1) in person or (2) by having it directly mailed to the voter at a bona fide address he or she designates ([PA 24-148](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

Campaign Finance

CEF Deposits

In 2024, the legislature clarified that any funds deposited into the Citizens' Election Fund (CEF) based on a determination by the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) in advance of a gubernatorial election (1) are in addition to any deposits the law otherwise requires and (2) do not affect the amount deposited in other years ([PA 24-61](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2025).

CEP Grants for Certain Election Contests

A new law allows certain candidates participating in the Citizens' Election Program (CEP) to receive a grant from the program for a new election or primary ordered by a court or for adjourned elections and primaries (i.e., contests that result in a tie and for which the subsequent primary or election is held three weeks later between the tied candidates). To qualify, the candidate must appear on the ballot for the new or adjourned contest and have previously received a CEP grant for the original contest ([PA 24-61](#), §§ 1 & 2, effective July 1, 2024).

Foreign Political Spending

This year, the legislature passed a new law prohibiting foreign nationals from making contributions or expenditures under the state's campaign finance laws. It similarly prohibits people from soliciting, accepting, or receiving contributions from foreign nationals. To enforce these measures, the law expands reporting requirements regarding foreign nationals for contributors and committees and makes violations of these provisions illegal campaign finance practices ([PA 24-28](#), effective upon passage).

Election Administration

Appearance of Ballot Vacancies

A new law generally requires town clerks to obscure the name of a candidate on a ballot due to an unfilled vacancy in an opaque manner (e.g., using a black marker) instead of using blank stickers. For presidential primaries, it specifically allows the secretary of the state to authorize clerks to use blank stickers or other means to obscure the name of a deceased candidate ([PA 24-148](#), §§ 18-23, effective July 1, 2024).

Authorized Individuals at Election Sites

Existing law allows (1) the public to observe absentee ballot counting at central counting locations and (2) election officials serving at a polling place to observe absentee ballot counting at that place. The legislature passed a new law specifically prohibiting candidates up for election or nomination from participating in counting ballots at these locations, except for town clerks, registrars, or deputy registrars performing their official duties (even if the clerk or registrar is on the ballot).

Additionally, the new law prohibits candidates up for election or nomination from being in a polling place during voting hours other than to cast a ballot (except for the above-listed officials performing their duties) ([PA 24-148](#), §§ 12-15, effective July 1, 2024).

Ballot Translation

A new law requires the secretary of the state to review the process for translating ballots from English into another language when required by federal or state law. By January 15, 2025, the secretary must submit a report to the Government Administration and Elections Committee with recommendations on this process and preventing mistranslations ([PA 24-148](#), § 30, effective July 1, 2024).

Centralized Voter Registration System (CVRS)

Under existing law, town clerks perform a variety of functions to oversee and implement election law at the local level. Starting July 1, 2024, a new act requires them to use CVRS whenever carrying out state election law provisions ([PA 24-148](#), § 11, effective July 1, 2024).

Early Voting Locations

State law requires a municipality's registrars of voters to designate at least one early voting location in their town. In 2024, the legislature modified how many days before the election contest these locations must be designated. It eliminated the alternative deadlines for special elections and presidential primaries and set one deadline for all elections and primaries ([PA 24-148](#), § 25, effective upon passage).

Early Voting Moderators

A new law specifies how a municipality's registrar of voters may serve as an early voting moderator. Under the law, the registrars must agree and submit a certification of their agreement to the secretary of the state. They must also submit a written coverage plan for the registrar's normal duties, to ensure the moderator abstains from any conflicting registrar duties ([PA 24-148](#), § 26, effective upon passage).

Elector Certification and Meeting

This year, the General Assembly designated the secretary of the state as the state official responsible for certifying presidential electors under the federal Electoral Count Reform Act of 2022. As the designated official, she must issue the elector certification and immediately transmit the certificate to the Archivist of the United States. Under the federal law, generally the governor has this responsibility, but states may designate another individual to serve this role.

Additionally, the act requires the presidential electors to meet on the Tuesday (rather than the Monday) after the second Wednesday in December ([PA 24-3](#), effective upon passage).

Municipal Election Audits

After a regular election or primary, state law requires audits of at least 5% of the jurisdiction's voting districts. A new law allows audits for municipal elections and primaries to begin 10 days earlier than previously authorized (i.e., five days after an election contest, instead of 15) ([PA 24-148](#), § 17, effective July 1, 2024).

Nondisclosure of Election Worker Residential Addresses

The General Assembly passed a new law prohibiting municipal public agencies from disclosing the residential addresses of most election-related workers under the Freedom of Information Act if the worker requests it. To qualify, the worker must give a municipality a written nondisclosure request and a substitute business address (or, if he or she does not have one, the business address of the town or city hall, or the municipality's registrars of voters). The prohibition generally applies 90 days before and after the election contest ([PA 24-148](#), § 31, effective July 1, 2024).

Election Crimes and Complaints

Election Worker Harassment

A new legislative act makes it a felony to influence or attempt to influence through force, threat, or harassment an election worker performing election administration duties. This applies to town clerks, registrars of voters, deputy registrars, and election, primary, and recanvass officials. The act also makes it a misdemeanor to publicly disclose an election worker's personal identifying information with the intent to harass, terrorize, or alarm the worker or improperly influence them in performing their election administration duties.

Additionally, election workers have a civil cause of action against violators of either provision under the act ([PA 24-148](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2024).

SEEC Complaints and Related Criminal Prosecutions

A new law requires certain complaints filed with SEEC on or after July 1, 2024, to be referred to the chief state's attorney for further enforcement action. Specifically, this applies to complaints where the commission determines that probable cause exists of a violation but does not issue a decision within 90 days after that determination. The law also requires the chief state's attorney to report on these referrals to the legislature ([PA 24-148](#), § 24, effective July 1, 2024).

Additionally, another new law extends the period during which an alleged election law violation referred from SEEC may be prosecuted. Specifically, it allows prosecution during the (1) existing statute of limitations period or (2) six months from when SEEC referred the complaint to the chief state's attorney, whichever period ends later ([PA 24-135](#), effective October 1, 2024, and applicable to (1) offenses committed on or after that date; (2) offenses committed before that date for which the statute of limitations in effect at the time of the offense had not yet expired as of October 1, 2024; or (3) any offense SEEC referred to the chief state's attorney on or after April 1, 2024).

Voting Interference

Under existing law, it is a felony to influence or attempt to influence a voter to stay away from an election by force or threat, bribery, or corrupt, fraudulent, or deliberately deceitful means, with intent to disenfranchise the voter. A new law extends this provision to cover using these prohibited actions to influence or attempt to influence an elector to refrain from voting.

It is also already a felony to willfully and fraudulently suppress or destroy any vote or ballot properly given or cast, or to willfully miscount or misrepresent the votes. The new law specifies that a violation of this provision or the one above may occur for votes cast (1) by mail; (2) into a secure drop box; or (3) in person at a polling place, early voting location, or same-day election registration location ([PA 24-148](#), §§ 6 & 7, effective July 1, 2024).

Municipal Government

Joint Appointment of Municipal Officials

This session, the legislature authorized regional councils of governments or municipalities acting jointly to make appointments on a municipality's behalf for municipal functions subject to a shared services or regional services agreement. Under the act, these municipal functions include the administrative and regulatory activities described in the laws for registrars of vital statistics as well as town clerks issuing dog licenses and tags, among others.

These appointments must apply jointly to each municipality that is a party to the agreement and be instead of the municipality's individual appointment. Under the act, this authority supersedes state and local law, local charters, and home rule ordinances that would prohibit or limit the ability to make these joint appointments ([PA 24-151](#), § 127, effective July 1, 2024).

Records and Filings

Access to Certain Vital Records

Existing law gives various parties the right to access a person's certified birth and fetal death records and certificates, such as the person's child, grandchild, spouse, parent, grandparent, or guardian. A new law extends this right to a person's legal custodian. The act also specifies that for guardians, this right applies to someone's legal guardian ([PA 24-68](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2024).

Birth Certificates

A new law creates a process for a parent of a child born outside of a hospital or other institution, if the birth certificate has not been created and the parent is unable to provide certain information, to seek a probate court order before the child's first birthday to require the town registrar of vital statistics to prepare and file the certificate. The process is similar to the existing process for delayed birth registration for children one year old or older ([PA 24-68](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2024).

DEEP Liens on Real Property

A new law creates a process by which someone with an interest in real property subject to an undischarged Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) lien, despite all relevant conditions being satisfied, may request a discharge and DEEP must abide by the request. As part of this process, DEEP must mail the lien release to the municipality where the lien is recorded ([PA 24-42](#), effective upon passage).

Recording and Rerecording of Real Estate Listing Agreements

Under certain circumstances, a new law requires real estate listing providers who entered into a residential real estate listing agreement on or before June 30, 2024, to rerecord the agreement and record a notice of the agreement with the town clerk of jurisdiction by July 31, 2024. This applies if the agreement (1) claims to run with the land or binds future holders of interest in the property; (2) allows for any assignment of any right to list the property without first notifying and gaining consent from the property's owner; or (3) claims to create any lien, encumbrance, or other security interest in the property.

Generally, the act deems an agreement entered into on or after July 1, 2024, unfair if it does any of the above and does not require the listing provider to perform any part of the listing within one year of entering into the agreement. The act authorizes a (1) town clerk to refuse to receive unfair agreements for recording or rerecording and (2) court to direct a town clerk to discharge the recording or rerecording of the document.

The act also requires real estate listing providers to notify certain persons, including the applicable town clerk, if they (1) record or rerecord these listing agreements, notices, or memorandums and (2) assign their rights to provide the listing ([PA 24-101](#), §§ 1-6, effective July 1, 2024).

Trade Names

This session, the legislature passed a new law expanding the state's trade name law. In Connecticut, "trade name" is the term generally given to an individual doing business under an assumed name. Generally, a trade name application must be made to the town clerk's office in the town where the business is, or will be, principally transacted. Among other things, the new law does the following:

1. makes separate applications for a natural person and business entity and requires additional information;
2. standardizes the application form, sets the fees for town clerks to charge (\$20 each), and establishes a renewal and cancellation process;
3. requires town clerks to issue a trade name certificate upon accepting an application; limits the validity of a trade name to five years at a time; and allows those issued trade names before January 1, 2025, to be renewed until December 31, 2029;
4. requires the secretary of the state to create an electronic system to process trade name certificate applications, and allows the secretary to require town clerks to use the system starting January 1, 2026; and
5. specifies a town clerk does not have to determine that the trade name is unique within any Connecticut town ([PA 24-111](#), §§ 34-39 & 54-56, most provisions effective January 1, 2025).

Tribal Access to State's Electronic Vital Records Systems

A new act requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), upon the request of the Mashantucket Pequot or Mohegan tribe, to grant the tribe access to the state's birth and death registries in DPH's electronic vital records system. This access must allow the tribe, instead of a municipality, to register births and deaths that occur on tribal land. These tribe-issued certificates must be recognized as valid in the state, as long as they meet specified requirements in state law and regulations.

Among other things, the act (1) requires anyone responsible for filing birth or death certificates with a municipality to cooperate and fulfill its filing obligations with a requesting tribe in the same way as it would with a municipality and (2) provides a process for DPH to terminate a tribe's access to the registries for failure to comply with specified requirements ([PA 24-68](#), § 39, effective upon passage).

Voting Registration

Cross-Referencing

State law requires the jury administrator to compile a list of all qualified jurors in the state along with certain corresponding information, such as their address and birthdate. Under a new law, the jury administrator, within 30 days after creating each annual list, must share it with the secretary of the state in order for her to verify information in the online voter registration system. Additionally, the act requires the secretary to cross-reference the jury administrator's list with the system ([PA 24-148](#), §§ 28 & 29, effective July 1, 2025).

Data Confidentiality

In certain circumstances, a Connecticut state agency, another state, or the federal government may share voter registration data with the secretary of the state in order to maintain Connecticut's voter registration systems. A new law requires the secretary to designate all data received for these purposes from these entities as confidential. Prior law only required the secretary to designate this information as confidential if the entity providing the data required it ([PA 24-148](#), § 10, effective upon passage).

Record Checks

Under prior law, the secretary of the state could conduct searches of computerized voter records to identify voters registered in more than one town. Instead, a new law requires her to conduct this search annually as well as evaluate if voters are registered multiple times in the same town. The law also requires, instead of allows, her to compile a list of duplicate registrations and transmit this list to the registrars of voters of the affected towns ([PA 24-148](#), § 27, effective January 1, 2025).

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