

2019 -- S 0589

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- VOTER REGISTRATION

Introduced By: Senator Mark P. McKenney

Date Introduced: March 14, 2019

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(Secretary of State)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Sections 17-9.1-23 and 17-9.1-24 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-9.1  
2 entitled "Registration of Voters" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **17-9.1-23. Party designation.**

4           (a) Whenever any person registers to vote, that person may designate his or her party  
5 affiliation, or that person may designate that he or she is not affiliated with any political party.  
6 The information shall be recorded on a form prescribed by the state board of elections.

7           (b) Any person who is already registered to vote and wishes to designate his or her party  
8 affiliation may do so by voluntarily presenting himself or herself to that person's local board of  
9 canvassers and designating his or her party affiliation and certifying to the fact on the form  
10 furnished for that purpose.

11           (c) ~~Whenever any person participates in a party primary, that act shall serve as~~  
12 ~~identifying the person as being affiliated with the party in whose primary that person has~~  
13 ~~participated and the local board shall record the affiliation on the appropriate form. For the~~  
14 ~~purposes of this section, "participating in a party primary" does not include the circulation or~~  
15 ~~signing of nomination papers.~~

16           **17-9.1-24. Change of designation.**

17           (a) Any person, other than a candidate, who has designated his or her party affiliation  
18 pursuant to § 17-9.1-23 may change the designation on or before the ~~ninetieth (90th)~~ thirtieth day  
19 preceding any primary election for which the person is eligible. Whenever any person desires to

1 change his or her party designation, that person shall appear before the local board of the city or  
2 town in which that person has his or her residence, as defined in § 17-1-3.1, or before the clerk or  
3 other duly authorized agent of the board, and shall change his or her party designation and, after  
4 the information has been recorded on the form furnished for that purpose, the person shall sign  
5 his or her name and certify to the truth of the facts recorded in the appropriate spaces in the form;  
6 or the person shall furnish an affidavit properly executed and signed by him or her to the board  
7 directing the board to change the party designation. Whenever any person is unable to sign his or  
8 her name because of physical incapacity or otherwise, that person shall make his or her mark  
9 "(X)", which shall be witnessed by the person receiving the registration. For the convenience of  
10 persons voting at a primary election, affidavits for changing party designation shall be available  
11 at all primary polling places. The presence of the affidavits at the primary polling place shall not  
12 be construed to allow a person to change his or her party designation within ~~ninety (90)~~ thirty  
13 (30) days preceding the primary election.

14 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, affidavits for  
15 changing party designation which are executed by voters at polling places immediately after  
16 voting in primary elections conducted in the city of Warwick in January, 2000, shall take effect  
17 immediately.

18 (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, affidavits for  
19 changing party designation which are executed by voters at polling places immediately after  
20 voting in primary elections conducted in senate district 20 comprising parts of the city of  
21 Woonsocket and town of Cumberland in March, 2008, shall take effect immediately.

22 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
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1           This act would remove the requirement that any person who participates in a party  
2 primary be recorded with that party's affiliation. It would also allow any person, other than the  
3 candidate, to change their party affiliation thirty (30) days rather than the current ninety (90) days  
4 before the primary.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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