

2015 -- H 5931

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS - REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

Introduced By: Representatives Coughlin, Solomon, Kazarian, Johnston, and Melo

Date Introduced: March 19, 2015

Referred To: House Judiciary

(Board of Elections)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 17-9.1-26 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-9.1 entitled
2 "Registration of Voters" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **17-9.1-26. Confirmation process -- Verification of the address of registered voter. --**

4 (a) (1) Whenever: (i) an acknowledgement card, which was mailed to a voter whose application
5 to register to vote has been accepted, is returned as undeliverable; (ii) through the periodic
6 updating of voter registration records as provided in § 17-9.1-27, a change of address is detected
7 for any voter; (iii) as the result of a challenge under § 17-9.1-28, the challenged voter fails to
8 appear before the local board; or (iv) a mailing by the jury commissioner to a voter is returned as
9 undeliverable; the local board shall begin the confirmation process described in subsection (b) of
10 this section.

11 (2) Whenever any other official mailing from either the state board or a local board or
12 from the office of the secretary of state, which official mailing has been sent to at least a majority
13 of the registered voters in a particular city or town, is returned as undeliverable to any one or
14 more of the voters to whom it was mailed, the local board may commence the confirmation
15 process described in subsection (b) of this section.

16 (b) The confirmation notice shall be sent by first-class forwardable mail and shall be of
17 any size or other specifications that shall be determined by the state board. The notice shall
18 include a voter registration form that may be used by the voter to verify or correct the voter's
19 residence address for voting purposes.

1 (c) The confirmation notice shall be prepared in substantially the following form and
2 shall contain substantially the following information, subject to any additional information as
3 may be required by the state board; provided, that the wording of the form may be revised and
4 updated from time to time by the state board in a manner to make its content as easily readable
5 and understandable as possible:

6 The board of canvassers has received information that you may no longer reside at the
7 address from which you are currently registered. If you have not permanently changed your
8 residence address or if you have permanently changed your residence address but continue to live
9 in the same city or town you should immediately return the voter registration form no later than
10 fourteen (14) days after the date of this mailing even if this notice was mailed to your correct
11 current address. If the voter registration form is not returned, affirmation or confirmation of your
12 current address may be required at the polls on election day. If the registration form is not
13 returned and you do not vote by _____ which is the date of the second general election
14 following the date of this mailing, then your name may be removed from the voter registration
15 list. If you have permanently changed residence address to another city or town in Rhode Island,
16 please complete, and return the completed voter registration form to the local board of canvassers
17 in the city or town of your current address.

18 (d) The confirmation notice shall be mailed to both the voter's current registered address
19 and any new residence address, to the extent both addresses are available to the local board.

20 (e) If a confirmation notice is mailed to a voter and returned as undeliverable, or if
21 delivered and the voter has not responded within fourteen (14) days from the date of the mailing,
22 the voter shall remain on or be placed on the inactive list and shall not be permitted to vote until
23 the voter has signed an affirmation form at either the approved polling place or at the local board
24 of canvassers as provided in this chapter. [Any application for a mail ballot under § 17-20-2.1 or](#)
25 [an emergency mail ballot under § 17-20-2.2 shall serve as a proper affirmation form under this](#)
26 [section, if the address is the same as the voter's current address on record with the board of](#)
27 [canvassers.](#) If the voter fails to vote by the second general election following the date of the
28 confirmation mailing, then the voter shall be removed from the voting list. Notwithstanding the
29 foregoing provisions, if the confirmation mailing was based upon the change of address
30 information provided by or through the United States Postal Service National Change of Address
31 Program, and the voter has failed to respond to the confirmation mailing, the voter shall remain
32 on the active list of voters and shall not be required to sign the affirmation form. In these cases,
33 the voter's residence address for voting purposes will be changed by the local board to the new
34 address as indicated by the National Change of Address Program.

1 (f) Local boards shall be required to maintain for a period of at least two (2) years a
2 record of all outgoing confirmation mailings, including the reasons for the mailing of the
3 confirmations. Records shall be kept in a fashion that may be determined by the state board.

4 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 change the mail ballot application allowing the application to serve as an
2 affirmation form for inactive voters who request a mail ballot from the address from which the
3 voter is currently registered.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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