

2021 -- H 6007

LC001515

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTION S-- MAIL BALLOTS

Introduced By: Representatives Chippendale, Quattrocchi, Place, and McLaughlin

Date Introduced: February 26, 2021

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 17-20-1 and 17-20-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-20 entitled  
2 "Mail Ballots" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **17-20-1. Voting by mail ballot.**

4 The electors of this state who, for any of the reasons set forth in § 17-20-2, being otherwise  
5 qualified to vote, are unable to vote in person, shall have the right to vote, [upon filing an application](#)  
6 [to vote by mail](#), in the manner and time provided by this chapter, in all general and special elections  
7 and primaries, including presidential primaries in this state for electors of president and vice-  
8 president of the United States, United States senators in congress, representatives in congress,  
9 general officers of the state, senators and representatives in the general assembly for the respective  
10 districts in which the elector is duly qualified to vote, and for any other officers whose names appear  
11 on the state ballot and for any city, town, ward, or district officers whose names appear on the  
12 respective city or town ballots in the ward or district of the city or town in which the elector is duly  
13 qualified to vote, and also to approve or reject any proposition of amendment to the Constitution  
14 or other propositions appearing on the state, city, or town ballot.

15 **17-20-2. Eligibility for mail ballots.**

16 [\(a\)](#) Any otherwise qualified elector may vote by mail ballot in the following circumstances:

17 (1) An elector, within the State of Rhode Island who is incapacitated to the extent that it  
18 would be an undue hardship to vote at the polls because of illness, or mental or physical disability,  
19 blindness, or serious impairment of mobility;

1           (2) An elector who is confined in any hospital, convalescent home, nursing home, rest  
2 home, or similar institution, public or private, within the State of Rhode Island;

3           (3) An elector who will be temporarily absent from the state because of employment or  
4 service intimately connected with military operations or who is a spouse or legal dependent residing  
5 with that person, or a United States citizen that will be outside of the United States;

6           (4) An elector who may not be able to vote at his or her polling place in his or her city or  
7 town on the day of the election.

8           (b) The secretary of state is prohibited from providing mail ballot applications to any  
9 elector in the state unless the secretary of state receives from the elector, a request for a mail ballot  
10 application for reasons contained in this section.

11           (c) The secretary of state is prohibited from distributing, via mass mail, mail ballot  
12 applications to the electors under any circumstances.

13           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 prohibit the secretary of state from mass mailing mail ballot applications
- 2 and would require that the elector request a mail ballot.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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