

2021 -- S 0185

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS -- EARLY VOTING

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, Coyne, Miller, McCaffrey, Gallo, Euer, and
DiPalma

Date Introduced: February 05, 2021

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 17-19 of the General Laws entitled "Conduct of Election and Voting
2 Equipment, and Supplies" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **17-19-24.4. In-person early voting.**

4 (a) In-person early voting shall be made available to any registered voter and eligible
5 elector of this state whose name appears upon the official voting list of the city or town where the
6 elector is so qualified to vote for all elections.

7 (b) The in-person early voting period shall begin on the twentieth day before a general or
8 primary election and extend through four o'clock (4:00) p.m. on the day before the general or
9 primary election.

10 (c) During the in-person early voting period as set forth in subsection (b) of this section,
11 in-person early voting shall take place at locations to be determined by each local board and
12 approved by the state board, with at least one location for each town or city. Prior to the beginning
13 of the in-person early voting period, a notice shall be published by the secretary of state in a
14 newspaper or newspapers having aggregate general circulation throughout the state, at least three
15 (3) days prior to the beginning of the in-person early voting period. Adequate notice of at least
16 seven (7) days shall be posted at each local board's office and on the city or town's website, if any,
17 informing the public of the locations where in-person early voting is to be conducted. Notice of the
18 in-person early voting period for each city or town shall also be posted on the secretary of state's
19 website, and the board of elections' website.

1 (1) Effective October 1, 2021, in-person early voting shall take place during normal
2 business hours in each city or town on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday during
3 the twenty (20) day in-person early voting period. In-person early voting shall take place on the
4 Saturday preceding a primary or general election day during the hours of twelve o' clock (12:00)
5 p.m. to four o' clock (4:00) p.m. and on the Sunday preceding a primary or general election day
6 during the hours of twelve o'clock (12:00) p.m. to four o'clock (4:00) p.m. during the twenty (20)
7 day in-person early voting period.

8 (2) Nothing contained herein shall be construed to prohibit a municipality from including
9 additional days and times where early voting is available, during the in-person early voting period.

10 (d) Prior to the in-person early voting period, the state board shall provide the local boards
11 with the ballots, ballot on-demand printers, ballot applications, tabulation equipment, ballot storage
12 boxes, voting booths, electronic poll books, instructions as to voting, and other supplies necessary
13 to effectuate the provisions of this section. During the in-person early voting period, the state board
14 shall provide technical support, as needed, at in-person early voting sites.

15 (e) The secretary shall make available, no later than the next business day, the updated list
16 of those persons that have cast their ballot during the in-person early voting period.

17 (f) At the conclusion of the early voting period, the local board shall note on the appropriate
18 electronic or paper-based voter roll, that the voter has cast an early vote, so as to prevent the voter
19 from casting an additional vote at the polls on election day.

20 (g) The procedure for voting during the in-person early voting period shall be established
21 through rules promulgated by the state board.

22 (h) The secretary of state and state board shall convene an in-person early voting advisory
23 committee to assist in the drafting of rules for the in-person early voting period. The advisory
24 committee shall be comprised of the following:

25 (1) Secretary of state, or his or her designee;

26 (2) Three (3) representatives from the board of elections to be selected by the board; and

27 (3) Three (3) representatives from the Rhode Island town and city clerks' association
28 elections committee appointed by the president of the Rhode Island town and city clerks'
29 association.

30 (i) The advisory committee shall advise the state board on issues including, but not limited
31 to:

32 (1) Staffing of in-person early voting locations;

33 (2) Suitable in-person early voting locations;

34 (3) Accessibility criteria to be considered for the selection of in-person early voting

1 [locations.](#)

2 [\(j\) The in-person early voting advisory committee shall sunset on December 31, 2021.](#)

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS -- EARLY VOTING

1 This act would authorize early voting for registered and eligible electors, in all elections
2 for the twenty (20) days before an election, at designated city and town locations, with advance
3 public notice and regulated by rules promulgated by the state board of elections. The board will be
4 assisted in its rulemaking by a temporary in-person early voting advisory committee, composed of
5 interested parties, that would sunset on December 31, 2021.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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