

2019 -- S 0589 SUBSTITUTE A

LC001541/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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

=====  
LC001541/SUB A  
=====

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T  
RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- VOTER REGISTRATION

\*\*\*

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 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. The board of elections shall also be required to provide a new form to be  
5 executed by voters desiring to switch their party affiliation.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

=====  
LC001541/SUB A  
=====