****

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE

165 CAPITOL AVENUE

HARTFORD, CT 06106

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

July Special Session, Public Act No. 20-3

AN ACT CONCERNING ABSENTEE VOTING AND REPORTING OF RESULTS AT THE 2020 STATE ELECTION, EXPANDING ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION AND RATIFYING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER THAT RELATE TO THE AUGUST 11, 2020, PRIMARY.

Section 1. Adds COVID-19 as a valid absentee ballot reason for the 2020 general election.

Section 2. Requires the Secretary of the State to print the COVID-19 reason on the inner envelope (B) for the 2020 general election.

Section 3. Allows the Secretary of the State to change any absentee ballot material to reflect the COVID-19 excuse for the 2020 general election.

Section 4. Requires the Town Clerk to issue an absentee ballot within 48 hours after receipt of the application for the 2020 general election.

Section 5. Allows for the use of ballot drop boxes for the return of absentee ballots for the 2020 general election. This section also requires the Town Clerk to empty each drop box within their town at the end of each weekday. If the drop box is not located at town hall, the town clerk must be accompanied by a police officer.

Section 6. Allows the Town Clerk and Registrars of Voters to begin sorting and pre-checking absentee ballots as early as 14 days before the election for the 2020 general election.

Section 7. Requires that any person who is able to appear in person at the polls on election day to withdraw their ballot with the Town Clerk by 5 P.M. of the day before the 2020 general election.

Section 8. Allows the Secretary of the State to waive the supervised absentee balloting requirement for the 2020 general election provided the Secretary (1) waives such requirement in recognition of the public health and civil preparedness emergency declared by the Governor on March 10, 2020, and has consulted with the Commissioner of Public Health or said commissioner's designee regarding such waiver, (2) has given written notice to the Town Clerk and Registrars of Voters in each municipality, and (3) has submitted a report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections advising of such waiver and specifying alternative actions to be taken to provide opportunities for absentee voting by electors described in this section.

Section 9. Requires the Registrar of Voters to certify the location of the Election Day Registration location in writing to the Secretary of the State not later than thirty-one days before election day. The certification shall (i) include the name, street address and relevant contact information associated with such location, (ii) list the name and address of each election official appointed to serve at such location, and (iii) provide a description of the design of such location and a plan for effective completion and processing of such applications. The Secretary shall approve or disapprove such written certification not later than fifteen days before election day and may require the registrars of voters to appoint one or more additional election officials or alter such design or plan.

The Registrars of Voters may apply to the Secretary of the State not later than sixty days before election day to designate any additional location for the completion and processing of election day registration applications on election day. The Secretary shall approve or disapprove such application not later than forty-five days before election day. If the Secretary approves such application, the Registrars of Voters may so designate any such additional location.

Section 10. Allows any person who is in line at 8 P.M. at an Election Day Registration location to complete the registration process and to cast a ballot.

Section 11. Allows the registry list complete with a certificate of the whole number of names registered on the list eligible to vote in the election or primary and the number checked as having voted in that election to be deposited it in the office of the municipal clerk not later than 96 hours after the close of the polls for the 2020 general election.

Section 12. After the preliminary list has been transmitted to the Secretary of the State, any other remaining result of the votes cast required to be publicly announced by the moderator shall be announced not later than ninety-six hours after the close of the polls for the 2020 general election.

Section 13. Allows a discrepancy recanvass to be called by the moderator up to five days after the 2020 general election. If called, the recanvass must be completed no later than seven days after the 2020 general election. The final paperwork must be filed no later than 12 days after the 2020 general election.

Section 14. Requires that the final head moderator’s return be submitted to the Secretary of the State no later than 96 hours after the close of the 2020 general election. The hard copy paper return must be submitted to the Secretary of the State not later than the 5th day after the 2020 general election.

Section 15. For the state election in 2020, the results of the votes cast at the election must be provided to the town clerk by the registrars of voters not later than ninety-six hours following the election. The meeting to identify any error in the returns among the head moderator, registrars of voters and town clerk for each town divided into voting districts shall occur not later than nine o'clock a.m. on the fifth day following the election. Any identified error must be corrected, and any amended return must be filed with the Secretary of the State, the town clerk and the registrars of voters, by the head moderator not later than one o'clock p.m. on the fifth day following the election.