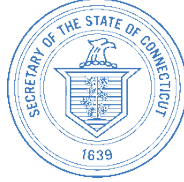


Office of the Connecticut Secretary of the State

165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106



To: All Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters
From: The Legislation and Elections Administration Division
Date: February 5, 2026
Re: Permanent Absentee Balloting

As you know, the law establishes permanent absentee ballot status for people who qualify. Below, we explain the process and provide details on the procedure, including eligibility and the annual notice.

Overview

The law makes electors with a permanent disability, or suffering from a long-term illness, eligible for permanent absentee ballot status (CGS Sec. 9-14e, as amended by PA 24-148, Sec. 16). Once attained, this status remains with the voter until they (1) are removed from the permanent absentee ballot list pursuant to the process outlined below, (2) are removed from the town's official registry list, or (3) request to be removed from permanent absentee ballot status. This status enables the elector to receive an **absentee ballot** for each election, primary, and referendum in the municipality in which they are eligible to vote.

Please note that pursuant to PA 24-148, Sec. 16, registrars can no longer remove an elector from the permanent absentee ballot status list because they fail to return the annual notice. The reasons for which registrars can remove an elector from the list are outlined below.

Eligibility

To be eligible for permanent absentee ballot status, an elector must file an absentee ballot application, together with a doctor's certificate stating that they have a permanent disability or long-term illness and are unable to appear in person at their polling place. The law does not prescribe an official form for use as a doctor's certificate. Therefore, a note from the elector's doctor (presumably, on letterhead) which indicates a disability or long-term illness and the statement that the elector is unable to appear in person at the polls satisfies this requirement.

Procedure

When a municipal clerk receives an absentee ballot application accompanied by a doctor's certificate from an elector seeking absentee ballot status, the clerk should forward a copy of the

application to the registrars of voters so they can indicate permanent status on the elector's record in the centralized voter registration system (CVRS).

The municipal clerk must send out an absentee ballot to any elector with the status for each event in which they are eligible to vote. Clerks should send absentee ballots on the first day when they become available (e.g., 21 days before a primary and 31 days before an election). CGS Sec. 9-140(f). Although permanent absentee ballot status allows the municipal clerk to send out an absentee ballot for each relevant event without an additional absentee ballot application, it does not allow the municipal clerk to forgo any other absentee balloting requirements. This means, for example, that clerks must include all the necessary envelopes in the absentee voting sets and comply with supervised absentee balloting requirements.

We asked the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission (FOIC) whether the doctor's certification is subject to disclosure pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. FOIC indicated that the doctor's note is not subject to disclosure. The original absentee ballot application, however, is subject to disclosure just like any other absentee ballot application. As a reminder, CGS Sec. 9-140(i) states, "the municipal clerk shall file executed applications in alphabetical order according to the applicants' surnames. Such applications shall be preserved as a public record as required by section 9-150b."

Annual Notice to Determine Residency

The registrars of voters must send an annual written notice in January of each year, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State, to determine if an elector with this status continues to reside at the address on their permanent absentee ballot application. In response to this letter, the registrars of voters must perform one of four possible actions. The registrars must:

1. remove the elector from permanent absentee ballot status if the notice is returned as undeliverable;
2. remove the elector from the official registry list and send the elector a voter registration application if they have moved out of town;
3. leave the elector on permanent absentee ballot status and change the elector's address if they have moved within the municipality; or
4. leave the elector on permanent absentee ballot status without changing their address if they have not moved.

Please note: Under Public Act 24-148, Sec. 16, **registrars can no longer remove electors from the permanent absentee ballot status list because they fail to return the annual notice.** Similarly, registrars cannot remove electors from the official registry simply for failure to return the notice.

We provide a sample notice at the end of this letter for registrars of voters to use when contacting an elector on the permanent absentee ballot list.

Notice of Permanent Absentee Ballot Status

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Office Box: _____ (optional)

Date of Birth: _____ (optional)

Important! This Notice Concerns Your Permanent Absentee Ballot Status

The Registrars of Voters are conducting an annual review as required by law to determine if you continue to reside at the residence address indicated above for purposes of your permanent absentee ballot status. The address listed above is the address you provided on your permanent absentee ballot application. If you would like to remove yourself from the permanent absentee ballot list, you may use this form to do so.

Please check the statement below that applies, sign in the space provided below, and immediately return this form.

☐ Remove me from the permanent absentee ballot list.

☐ My residence is at the address shown above.

☐ I have moved. The address of my new residence is:

Note: If your new residence is in another town, you must register to vote in that town to be entitled to vote there. If your new residence address is still within this town, we will change your address on the official voter list.

Please record this change on the voter registry list.

Signature of Elector