

2022 -- H 8103

LC005687

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS

Introduced By: Representatives Newberry, and Shanley

Date Introduced: April 06, 2022

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 17-20-14 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-20 entitled "Mail
2 Ballots" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **17-20-14. Voting from hospitals, convalescent homes, nursing homes, rest homes or**
4 **similar institutions public or private within the State of Rhode Island -- Penalty for**
5 **interference.**

6 (a) The state board of elections shall appoint as many bipartisan pairs of supervisors as are
7 necessary whose duty it shall be to attend each hospital, rest home, nursing home and convalescent
8 home, or similar types of personal care facility in the state within ~~twenty (20)~~ thirty (30) days prior
9 to the election. The appointees shall only act jointly when performing their duties pursuant to this
10 section; while acting singularly shall be a violation of § 17-20-30. Within thirty (30) days prior to
11 the election, the board's appointment of the bipartisan pair of supervisors shall be submitted to the
12 chair of each recognized political party, and each chair shall have ten (10) days thereafter to replace
13 the appointed supervisor with an individual of their choice representing their political party. They
14 shall supervise the casting of votes by persons using mail ballots at a place that preserves their
15 secrecy and shall take acknowledgments or serve as witnesses, and jointly provide assistance, if
16 requested, to assure proper marking, sealing, and mailing of ballots as voted. Every mail ballot cast
17 by a patient in a hospital or convalescent home within this state must be witnessed by the state
18 supervisors. It shall be the duty of the person or persons in charge of hospitals, rest homes, nursing
19 homes and convalescent homes, or similar types of personal care facility to allow the state

1 supervisors to perform their duties as set forth in this section at all reasonable times. Every person
2 who willfully hinders the state supervisors in performing their duties as set forth in this section
3 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

4 (b) It shall be the responsibility of the state board of elections to provide all bipartisan pairs
5 of supervisors with an official identification card. All bipartisan pairs of supervisors will be
6 required to have in their possession their identification card when conducting official business.

7 (c) Any person who deliberately misrepresents themselves as an official of the board of
8 elections, or who deceives, coerces, or interferes with a voter casting a ballot, shall be subject to
9 prosecution under § 17-20-30.

10 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 change the amount of time the board of elections has to appoint the
2 bipartisan pairs of supervisors, for mail ballot execution at personal care facilities from twenty (20)
3 days to thirty (30) days. It would expressly prohibit one member of the supervisors from acting
4 singularly. Finally, it would authorize the chairs of each major political party to replace any board-
5 appointed supervisors prior to the day of the election.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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