

H.598

An act relating to sorting early voter absentee ballots

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 17 V.S.A. § 2546(a) is amended to read:

(a) No sooner than 30 days before the opening of polls on election day, the town clerk of a municipality with at least ~~5,000~~ 300 registered voters on its checklist may direct two election officials working together to open the outside envelope in order to sort early voter absentee ballots by ward and district, may data enter the return of the ballots by the voter, may determine that the certificate has been signed, and may place the inside envelopes in various secure containers to be transported to the polling places on election day. No sooner than 48 hours before the opening of polls on election day, a town clerk in all other municipalities may direct two election officials working together to open the outside envelope and remove the certificate envelope in order to determine that an early voter absentee ballot certificate has been properly signed by the early voter, and that the name of the early voter appears on the checklist. The election officials shall check the name of the early voter off the entrance checklist and place the sealed envelope into a secure container marked “checked in early voter absentee ballots” to be transported to the

polling place on election day. Upon opening of the polls on election day, ballots from this container shall be opened by election officials, who are not members of the same political party, and deposited either into the ballot box or into the voting machine.