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COMBINES H.512 AND H.514

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1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Government Operations to which was referred House
3 Bill No. 512 entitled “An act relating to the procedure for conducting recounts”
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the
5 Senate propose to the House that the bill be amended by striking out all after
6 the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 * * * Primary and General Election Recounts * * *

8 Sec. 1. 17 V.S.A. chapter 51, subchapter 9 is amended to read:

9 Subchapter 9. Recounts and Contest of Elections

10 § 2601. ~~RECOUNTS~~ RECOUNT THRESHOLD

11 (a)(1) In an election for statewide office, county office, or State Senator, if
12 the difference between the number of votes cast for a winning candidate and
13 the number of votes cast for a losing candidate is ~~less than~~ two percent or less
14 of the total votes cast for all the candidates for an office, divided by the
15 number of persons to be elected, that losing candidate shall have the right to
16 have the votes for that office recounted.

17 ~~(b)~~(2) In an election for ~~all other offices~~ State Representative, if the
18 difference between the number of votes cast for a winning candidate and the
19 number of votes cast for a losing candidate is ~~less than~~ five percent or less of
20 the total votes cast for all the candidates for an office, divided by the number

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1 of persons to be elected, that losing candidate shall have the right to have the
2 votes for that office recounted.

3 (b) In the case of a recount for a local election, the threshold and
4 procedures for conducting the recount shall be as provided in chapter 55,
5 subchapter 3 of this title.

6 § 2602. PETITIONS FOR RECOUNTS; SETTING DATE OF RECOUNT

7 ~~(a) In the case of recounts for local elections and recounts for the office of~~
8 ~~justice of the peace, the procedures for conducting the recount shall be as~~
9 ~~provided in subchapter 3 of chapter 55 of this title. [Repealed.]~~

10 (b) In the case of recounts ~~other than specified~~ described in subsection
11 2601(a) of this section ~~subchapter~~, the following procedure shall apply.

12 (1) A petition for a recount shall be filed within seven calendar days
13 after the election.

14 (2) The petition shall be filed with:

15 (A) the Civil Division of the Superior Court, Washington County, in
16 the case of candidates for State or congressional office, or for a presidential
17 election; ~~the petition shall be filed with or~~

18 (B) the Superior Court in any county in which votes were cast for the
19 office to be recounted, in the case of any other office.

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1 (3) The petition shall be supported, if possible, by a certified copy of the
2 certificate of election prepared by the canvassing committee, verifying the total
3 number of votes cast and the number of votes cast for each candidate.

4 (c)(1) The Superior Court shall:

5 (A) set the date of the recount to be:

6 (i) five business days after the Court receives the petition ~~for~~, in
7 the case of a primary recount; or

8 (ii) 10 business days after the Court receives the petition, in the
9 case of a general election recount; and shall

10 (B) notify all candidates of ~~that~~ the recount date no later than the next
11 business day after the petition is received.

12 (2)(A) The Superior Court shall forward a copy of the petition to the
13 county clerk.

14 (B) The Court shall order the town clerk or clerks having custody of
15 the ballots to be recounted or their designees to transport ~~them~~ ballots and a
16 copy of the entrance checklist from the election to be recounted to the county
17 clerks of their respective counties before the day set for the recount.

18 (C) ~~County clerks~~ The county clerk shall store all ballots, still in their
19 sealed containers, in ~~their vaults~~ his or her vault until the day of the recount.

20 (d)-(h) [Repealed.]

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1 (i) ~~The Secretary of State shall bear the costs of recounts covered under this~~
2 ~~chapter. [Repealed.]~~

3 § 2602a. APPOINTMENT OF RECOUNT COMMITTEE; ~~SETTING DATE~~
4 OF RECOUNT

5 (a)(1) Upon receipt of a petition, the county clerk shall notify ~~the chairs of~~
6 ~~the relevant county political committees that a petition has been filed~~
7 ~~requesting a recount and advising them to submit immediately a list of~~
8 ~~nominees for individuals to serve on a recount committee.~~

9 (2) ~~In the case of a recount in a primary election, the county clerk shall~~
10 ~~notify all candidates for the office which that is the subject of the recount,~~
11 ~~advising them to each submit immediately a list of a minimum of 10 nominees~~
12 ~~for individuals to serve on a recount committee.~~

13 (3) ~~If a candidate for an office which is the subject of a recount is from a~~
14 ~~party which does not have a county committee, the county clerk shall send a~~
15 ~~copy of the notice to the State committee of the party advising them to submit~~
16 ~~immediately a list of nominees for individuals to serve on a recount committee.~~

17 (4) ~~If a candidate for an office which is the subject of a recount is~~
18 ~~independent, the county clerk shall send that candidate a copy of the notice and~~
19 ~~request him or her to submit immediately a similar list of nominees for~~
20 ~~individuals to serve on a recount committee.~~

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1 ~~(5)(2)(A)~~ If a list of nominees is not delivered to the county clerk within
2 two business days, the clerk shall notify the appropriate candidates that they
3 have 24 hours to submit lists of nominees for individuals to serve on the
4 recount committee.

5 (B) If the petitioning candidate fails to submit a complete list of
6 nominees by this deadline, the recount shall not move forward.

7 (C) If any other candidate fails to submit a complete list of nominees,
8 the county clerk shall request additional nominees from the other candidates.

9 (b)(1) The Superior Court shall make a minimum of 12 appointments to the
10 recount committee from among those nominated under this section, with the
11 number of appointments based on the number of votes to be recounted and a
12 goal of completing the recount within one day.

13 (2) In making these appointments, the court shall appoint an equal
14 number of persons from each party and from those persons representing an
15 independent each candidate, to the extent practicable.

16 § 2602b. ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES; RECOUNT MATERIALS

17 (a)(1) The county clerk shall supervise the recount and ~~may appoint a~~
18 ~~sufficient number of impartial assistants to perform appropriate tasks which~~
19 ~~have not been assigned to recount committee members.~~ The county clerk shall
20 recruit town clerks or their designees to serve as impartial assistants to the

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1 county clerk for operating the vote tabulators, and shall consult with the
2 Secretary of State to identify any vote tabulators to be used.

3 (2) The county clerk ~~shall store all ballots, still in their sealed~~
4 ~~containers, in his or her vault until the day of the recount~~ may appoint a
5 sufficient number of additional impartial assistants to perform tasks that have
6 not been assigned to recount committee members.

7 (3) On each day of the recount, the town clerk of any town subject to the
8 recount shall be available to the county clerk in person or by telephone to
9 answer any questions the county clerk may have regarding that town's
10 election.

11 (b)(1) The county clerk shall assign committee members to the following
12 ~~teams of at least four persons, consisting of one caller and one observer,~~
13 ~~representing different candidates, and one tally person and one double-check~~
14 ~~person, representing different candidates;~~

15 (A) Counting teams comprising at least four persons each, consisting
16 of an equal number of persons ~~from~~ representing each ~~of the lists of nominees~~
17 candidate, to the extent possible;

18 (B) One vote tabulator team, comprising two persons, each of whom
19 is from a different list of nominees represents a different candidate; and

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1 (C) One clerk observer team, comprising two persons, one of whom
2 is from the list of the petitioning candidate and one of whom, if possible, is
3 from the list of the winning candidate who received the lowest number of
4 votes.

5 (2) Any additional team members shall be additional observers and
6 double-check persons, who shall be assigned to ensure that each candidate has
7 one person assigned as either a caller or an observer and one person assigned
8 as either a tally person or a double-check person. One team shall be designated
9 as the clerk-observer team, which shall perform only the functions established
10 under this subchapter for that team remain unassigned and shall be used as
11 necessary on the day of the recount.

12 (c) ~~The recount committee shall use~~ Secretary of State shall provide to the
13 recount committee:

14 (1) fresh seals, manila tags, tally sheets, double-check sheets, summary
15 sheets for each polling place town, master lists for the entire election to be
16 recounted, and other appropriate material provided deemed appropriate by the
17 Secretary of State; and

18 (2) the official return of votes for each town subject to the recount.

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1 § 2602c. PREPARATION FOR RECOUNT; GENERAL RULES

2 (a) Recount area; preserving order.

3 (1)(A) The county clerk shall designate an area within which the recount
4 shall take place.

5 (B) Persons who are not committee members or who have not been
6 designated as impartial assistants by the county clerk shall be permitted to
7 view the recount in progress, but shall not be permitted within the recount area.

8 (2) The county clerk shall preserve order. If a person, after notice, is
9 persistently disorderly and refuses to withdraw from the premises, the county
10 clerk may cause the person to be removed from the premises.

11 (b) Preliminary requirements. Before the recount begins, ~~the~~ and any
12 containers are opened:

13 (1) Explaining procedures. The county clerk shall explain the recount
14 procedures ~~which~~ that are to be followed and shall answer questions relating to
15 such procedures. ~~The county clerk shall use volunteer town clerks to operate~~
16 ~~and instruct on the use of vote tabulators.~~

17 (2) Blank ballots; vote tabulator test.

18 (A) The county clerk shall obtain blank ballots from the town clerks
19 of the towns subject to the recount. These blank ballots shall be used as test
20 ballots to perform the vote tabulator test described in this subdivision (2).

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1 (B)(i) The vote tabulator team shall perform a test of the vote
2 tabulators that will be used by marking and feeding into each tabulator a
3 minimum of 10 test ballots. The test ballots shall be marked with various
4 votes for each candidate for the office subject to the recount.

5 (ii) If more than one memory card is to be used, such a test shall
6 be performed for each memory card.

7 (C) If a vote tabulator does not tabulate these votes accurately, it
8 shall not be used.

9 (D) Once the test is completed, these ballots and the tabulator tape
10 containing the results of the test shall be sealed in an envelope that shall be
11 dated and marked “TEST BALLOTS—DO NOT COUNT.” This envelope
12 shall then be kept separate from the rest of the containers.

13 ~~(b)~~(c) Tables. Each team shall have a separate table and the county clerk
14 shall have a separate table, and all of these tables shall be spaced apart.

15 (d) Separating containers, polling places, and towns. Each recount team
16 shall;

17 (1) recount the contents of one container before opening another
18 container at its table, ~~shall~~;

19 (2) recount the contents of all the containers relating to one polling place
20 before moving to those of another polling place; ~~and shall~~

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1 (3) complete the recount for one town before moving to material relating
2 to another town.

3 ~~(e)~~(e) Recording containers. For each ~~polling place~~ town, the number of
4 containers shall be counted and recorded on the ~~master list~~ summary sheet for
5 that town.

6 ~~(d)~~(f) Inspecting containers and seals.

7 (1) Containers. Before opening, each container shall be inspected, and
8 if no tag is present, replacement manila tags shall be affixed, specifying date of
9 election and name of town and polling place.

10 (2) Seals.

11 ~~(A) Likewise, each~~ Each seal shall be ~~examined~~ inspected to see if it
12 is intact, and the county clerk shall attach to any ~~bag~~ container with a defective
13 seal a tag stating that the seal was defective and containing the information
14 ~~which~~ that was contained on the defective seal.

15 (B) If a seal number does not match the seal number reported by the
16 town clerk on the official return of votes, the county clerk shall contact the
17 town clerk to request an explanation for that difference. The county clerk shall
18 record any explanation on the summary sheet for that town.

19 ~~(e)~~(g) Uncounted containers. Uncounted containers shall be kept in one
20 part of the room and moved to the other side as they are counted; ~~each team~~

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1 ~~shall have a separate table and the county clerk shall have a separate table, all~~
2 ~~of which tables shall be spaced apart.~~

3 ~~(f)(h) Checklist container.~~ If there is more than one container from a
4 polling place, the county clerk shall open first the container ~~which~~ that is
5 identified as containing the checklist, if applicable.

6 ~~(i) Opening containers. Upon opening the first container in the presence of~~
7 ~~the clerk observer team, the~~ The county clerk shall empty the contents of each
8 container onto the clerk's his or her table in the presence of the clerk observer
9 team.

10 ~~(j) Materials not to be distributed.~~ The county clerk shall ensure that teams
11 are not given, and the teams shall not count:

12 (1) ballots marked defective or contained in a defective ballot envelope;

13 (2) unused ballots, early or absentee ballots which arrived after the close
14 of polls, that were not distributed to voters; or

15 (3) ballots spoiled returned by voters and turned in by voters requesting
16 fresh who requested replacement ballots, or ballots contained in a replaced
17 ballot envelope.

18 (k) Recording defective ballots. In the presence of the clerk observer team,
19 the county clerk shall mark the number of defective ballots from the official
20 return of votes for each town on the summary sheet for that town.

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1 **§ 2602d. REVIEW OF OFFICIAL RETURN OF VOTES; EXAMINATION**
2 **OF CHECKLISTS CHECKLIST**

3 (a)(1) The county clerk shall review the official return of votes for each
4 town, record on the summary sheet for each town the number of ballots
5 counted and the number of voters checked off the checklist on the town's
6 return, and if those two numbers are the same, the checklist for that town shall
7 not be examined.

8 (2) If those two numbers for a town are not the same, the checklist shall
9 be examined in accordance with the following provisions of this section.

10 (b) The checklist from the first ~~bag~~ container shall be assigned to a team.
11 ~~The caller and observer~~ Two persons who represent different candidates, each
12 acting independently, shall examine the checklist and determine how many
13 voters voted at the polling place, repeating the process until they agree on a
14 number or until they agree to disagree on a number.

15 (c) Then the checklist shall be examined by ~~the tally person and the~~
16 ~~double-check person~~ the remaining members of the team, repeating the process
17 until they agree on a number or they agree to disagree on the number.

18 (d) The results obtained from the two subgroups will be compared and if
19 they do not match, the process shall be repeated until there is agreement among
20 all the members of the team or until team members agree to disagree.

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1 ~~(d)~~(e) The number finally determined by a majority of team members shall
2 be submitted to the county clerk in the presence of the clerk observer team,
3 together with an indication of the nature and extent of ~~the~~ any disagreement.

4 ~~(f) If one or more team members do not agree with the number submitted,~~
5 ~~the~~ The county clerk shall note on the master list the fact summary sheet for
6 the town the number finally determined, together with a note indicating that the
7 number of people appearing as having voted on a specified the checklist was
8 subject to dispute, if one or more team members did not agree with the number
9 submitted.

10 § 2602e. SORTING BALLOTS; BALLOT REVIEW; RECOUNT OF

11 REMOVED BALLOTS BY HAND

12 (a) Sorting ballots.

13 (1) While the checklist is being examined, if applicable under subsection
14 2602d of this subchapter, after emptying a container onto his or her table, the
15 county clerk shall separate ballots from the container into a number of batches
16 equal to the number of counting teams, with each batch being of approximately
17 equal size.

18 (2) Each counting team shall take a batch of ballots from the county
19 clerk's table ~~and take that batch~~ to the counting team's table.

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1 (3) Two persons who represent different candidates on a counting team
2 shall sort that batch into stacks of 50 ballots, and the remaining members of the
3 team shall recount each stack to ensure that there are 50 ballots in it.

4 (4)(A) The counting teams shall combine any ballots not placed into a
5 stack of 50, and one of those counting teams shall separate those combined
6 ballots into stacks of 50 and recount them in accordance with subdivision (3)
7 of this subsection.

8 (B) For any final stack that contains fewer than 50 ballots, the county
9 clerk shall affix to the top of that stack a note indicating how many ballots are
10 contained in it.

11 (b) Ballot review and removal.

12 (1)(A) For each stack, a counting team shall review each ballot within
13 the stack and remove from that stack each ballot upon which, for the office in
14 question, the voter recorded his or her vote or votes in that race in any manner
15 other than completely filling in the oval to the right of ~~the~~ a preprinted
16 candidate's name.

17 (B) Each counting team shall also remove any plain paper or
18 damaged ballots.

19 (2) A ballot shall be removed only if at least two members of the
20 counting team agree to its removal.

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1 (3) A ballot without markings for the office in question shall not be
2 removed.

3 (4) A ballot that is not removed upon this first review shall not be
4 reviewed again.

5 (c) Delivery of remaining ballots.

6 (1) Each counting team shall then ~~count the number of ballots that~~
7 ~~remain in a stack in accordance with the process set forth in subdivision (a)(3)~~
8 ~~of this section and~~ attach to that stack a note with ~~that~~ the number of ballots
9 remaining in the stack.

10 (2) Two members representing different candidates on a counting team
11 shall deliver those ballots to the vote tabulator team, while the remaining
12 members of the counting team stay at the table with the removed ballots.

13 (d) Hand count of removed ballots; questionable votes.

14 (1) Each counting team shall then separate the removed ballots into
15 stacks of 50 in accordance with the process set forth in subdivision (a)(3) of
16 this section.

17 (2) The counting team shall then hand count the votes for the office in
18 question on the removed ballots, and mark the results on a tally sheet for each
19 stack of 50 removed ballots and any remaining stack with less than 50.

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1 (3)(A) This hand count shall be in accordance with the rules for
2 counting ballots set forth in section 2587 of this chapter, except that if two
3 persons on the counting team do not agree on how to count a vote, the ballot
4 shall be set aside as containing a questionable vote.

5 (B)(i) For any questionable vote, a copy of the ballot shall be made,
6 and this copy shall be clearly marked on its face identifying it as a copy. Once
7 the recount of a container is completed, any such copies shall be placed on the
8 top of the other ballots and shall remain together with the other ballots.

9 (ii) Each original ballot with a questionable vote shall be attached
10 to a note that identifies it by town, county, polling place, and container seal
11 number. The originals of these ballots with questionable votes shall be clipped
12 to the summary sheet for that town, along with a copy of the official return of
13 votes, and submitted to the court for a final decision.

14 (iii) The county clerk shall record the number of ballots containing
15 questionable votes to be submitted to the court on the summary sheet for the
16 town.

17 (C) At the end of the hand count for a container, two persons from
18 each counting team who represent different candidates shall deliver any tally
19 sheets from their table to the county clerk in the presence of the clerk observer
20 team.

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1 (D) The county clerk, in the presence of the clerk observer team,
2 shall record the totals from each tally sheet onto the summary sheet for the
3 town.

4 (e) This process shall be completed for as many containers as there are for
5 each town.

6 § 2602f. RECOUNT OF REMAINING BALLOTS BY VOTE TABULATOR

7 (a) The vote tabulator team shall operate any vote tabulator used in the
8 recount, with the assistance of the recruited town clerks or designees.

9 (b) The vote tabulator memory card shall be programmed to read only the
10 votes for the election that is the subject of the recount.

11 (c)(1) ~~Vote tabulator readable~~ At the same time as any removed ballots are
12 being hand counted, the vote tabulator team shall take any ballots from each
13 container shall be fed delivered to them, and feed them through a vote
14 tabulator ~~by one team until all vote tabulator readable ballots from the~~
15 container have been entered. For ballots unable to be read by a vote tabulator,
16 such as damaged or plain paper ballots, a second team shall collect these
17 ballots from the pile and transfer the voter's choices on those ballots to blank
18 ballots provided by the Secretary of State. After all of the vote tabulator
19 readable ballots have been fed through the vote tabulator, the first team shall
20 feed through the vote tabulator any transfer ballots created by the second team.

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1 (2) ~~The recount teams shall switch roles for each subsequent container~~
2 ~~of ballots of a polling place that are to be fed through the vote tabulator, if~~
3 ~~there is more than one container per polling place. The vote tabulator team~~
4 shall attempt to feed ballots into the vote tabulator in the same direction.

5 (3)(A) If the tabulator refuses a ballot, the vote tabulator team shall
6 announce that occurrence and whether the ballot was counted, and may
7 override that refusal.

8 (B) If the tabulator continues to refuse the ballot, the vote tabulator
9 team shall announce that occurrence and return it to a counting team for hand
10 counting.

11 (4) This process shall be used until all ballots from a ~~polling place~~
12 container have been tabulated by a vote tabulator or otherwise returned to a
13 counting team for hand counting.

14 ~~(b)~~(d)(1) This process shall be repeated until all ballots from a town have
15 been fed through a vote tabulator.

16 (2) If there is more than one container for a town, the tabulator tape shall
17 not be printed until ballots from all containers for that town have been
18 tabulated.

19 (e)(1) After all ballots from a ~~polling place~~ town have been tabulated by a
20 vote tabulator, a ~~recount team~~ the vote tabulator team shall print the tabulator

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1 tape containing the unofficial results and document those results on a tally
2 sheet for that town, and deliver that tabulator tape to the county clerk in the
3 presence of the clerk observer team.

4 (2) The county clerk shall then record the totals from the tabulator tape
5 onto the summary sheet for the town in the same manner that he or she
6 recorded the individual tally sheet totals from the hand-counted ballots.

7 ~~Another recount team shall then open the tabulator's ballot box and remove all~~
8 ~~ballots. The ballots shall then be divided among the recount teams to be~~
9 ~~examined to find write-in names and markings of voter intent that were not~~
10 ~~vote tabulator readable as outlined in the Secretary of State's vote tabulator~~
11 ~~guide and most recent elections procedures manual. A caller, tally person, and~~
12 ~~double-check person shall be used to examine the ballots removed from the~~
13 ~~ballot box. If the caller and the observer or observers do not agree on how a~~
14 ~~ballot should be counted, the entire team shall review the ballot and if all~~
15 ~~members agree, it shall be counted that way.~~

16 ~~(e) If one person does not agree, that ballot shall be set aside as a~~
17 ~~questioned ballot and a copy shall be made, which copy shall be clearly~~
18 ~~marked on its face identifying it as a copy. Any copies shall be placed on the~~
19 ~~top of the other ballots and shall remain together with the other ballots. Each~~
20 ~~original ballot deemed questionable shall be attached to a note which identifies~~

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1 ~~it by town, county, polling place, and bag seal number. The originals of these~~
2 ~~questionable ballots shall be clipped to the summary sheet for that polling~~
3 ~~place and returned to the court for a final decision.~~

4 ~~(d) After the court has rendered a final decision on a given questionable~~
5 ~~ballot, it shall be returned to the county clerk who shall keep it in a sealed~~
6 ~~container for a period of two years.~~

7 ~~(e) Write in votes for preprinted candidates shall be counted as votes for~~
8 ~~that candidate.~~

9 ~~(f) If the tally persons do not agree on the number of votes for a candidate~~
10 ~~on ballots not able to be read by the vote tabulator, the ballots shall be retallied~~
11 ~~until they do agree. Then the team shall notify the clerk that it has completed~~
12 ~~its recount.~~

13 § 2602h. COMPLETING THE TALLY

14 (a) The county clerk shall return all ballots to their container, seal the
15 container, record the seal number on the summary sheet, and write “recounted”
16 and specify the date of the recount on the tag.

17 (b) After ~~After~~ In the presence of the clerk observer team, the county clerk shall
18 add together the hand count and vote tabulator totals for a polling place have
19 been listed each town, as recorded on the tally sheets and vote tabulator tape
20 submitted to him or her, the county clerk shall add them up in the presence of

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1 ~~the clerk-observer team, and~~ record those totals on the summary sheet for that
2 town, and affix his or her seal to that summary sheet.

3 (c)(1) The county clerk shall compare the number of ballots recounted for
4 that town with the number of voters who voted at that ballots counted at the
5 polling place, according to the number obtained from the team that examined
6 the certified checklist town as reported on the official return of votes, and with
7 the number of voters who voted at that town according to the checklist
8 examination, as applicable under section 2602d of this subchapter and recorded
9 by the county clerk on the summary sheet in accordance with that section.

10 (2) If these numbers differ, the county clerk shall note the amount of the
11 difference on the summary sheets for that ~~polling place~~ town.

12 (d) If there is more than one town subject to the recount:

13 (1) this process shall be repeated for each town; and

14 (2) once all towns have been recounted, the county clerk shall add
15 together the totals from each town and record the total for all towns on a
16 master summary sheet and affix his or her seal to that sheet.

17 ~~(b) The county clerk shall return all ballots to the container, seal it, record~~
18 ~~the seal number on the summary sheet, write “recounted” and specify the date~~
19 ~~of the recount on the tag, and move it to the other side of the room, making~~
20 ~~sure that there is never more than one bag open at any one time.~~

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1 ~~(e) This procedure shall be repeated for each container, until the results~~
2 ~~from a polling place have been recounted, and then it shall be repeated until the~~
3 ~~results from all polling places in a town have been recounted, and then until the~~
4 ~~results from all towns have been recounted.~~

5 ~~(d) The county clerk shall add the totals on each summary sheet, affix the~~
6 ~~clerk's seal, and~~

7 (e) The county clerk shall send the summary sheets for all polling places
8 towns together with the any master list summary sheet, the ballots marked
9 defective or contained in a defective ballot envelope, and any questionable
10 original ballots containing questionable votes to the court by certified mail,
11 return receipt requested, or shall certify the results to the judge.

12 § 2602i. COSTS

13 (a) Recount committee members and assistants designated by the county
14 clerk shall be paid by the State at the same per diem and mileage rates and
15 according to the same procedures by which jurors are paid.

16 (b)(1) These and other necessary expenses, as approved by the court, shall
17 be paid by the State through the Court Administrator's Office.

18 (2) The Secretary of State shall bear the costs of recounts conducted
19 under this subchapter and shall reimburse the Court Administrator's Office.

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1 § 2602j. ~~OTHER RULES FOR CONDUCTING THE RECOUNT COURT~~
2 HEARING AND JUDGMENT

3 (a) ~~The county clerk shall preserve order. If a person, after notice, is~~
4 ~~persistently disorderly and refuses to withdraw from the premises, the county~~
5 ~~clerk may cause the person to be removed from the premises. [Repealed.]~~

6 (b) ~~The county clerk shall designate an area within which the recount shall~~
7 ~~take place. Persons who are not committee members shall be permitted to view~~
8 ~~a recount in progress, but persons not authorized by the county clerk shall not~~
9 ~~be permitted within the area designated by the county clerk. [Repealed.]~~

10 (c) Candidates and their attorneys shall be given the opportunity to present
11 evidence to the court relating to the conduct of the recount, how to count
12 questionable votes, or and the marking of any ballot as defective in accordance
13 with section 2547 of this title, or both.

14 (d) If the court determines that any violations of recount procedures have
15 occurred and that they may have affected the outcome of the recount, a new
16 recount shall be ordered.

17 (e) After such hearings or arguments as may be indicated under the
18 circumstances and making a final decision on any questionable votes, the
19 Superior Court, within five working days, shall:

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1 (1) issue a judgment, which shall supersede any certificate of election
2 previously issued;

3 (2) send a certified copy of the judgment to the Secretary of State; and
4 shall

5 (3) return to the county clerk any ballots containing questionable ballots
6 ~~which~~ votes and defective ballots that had been forwarded to the court.

7 § 2602k. ~~AFTER THE RECOUNT~~ TIES

8 (a) If the recount results in a tie, the court shall order a ~~recessed~~ runoff
9 election to be held, within three weeks of the recount, on a date set by the
10 court.

11 (b) The only candidates who shall appear on the ballot at the ~~recessed~~
12 runoff election shall be those who tied in the previous election.

13 (c) The ~~recessed~~ runoff election shall be considered a separate election for
14 the purpose of voter registration under chapter 43 of this title.

15 (d) If the recount confirms a tie as to any public question, ~~no recessed a~~
16 runoff election shall not be held, and the question shall be certified not to have
17 passed.

18 (e) Warnings for a ~~recessed~~ runoff election shall be posted as required by
19 subchapter 5 of this chapter, except that the warnings shall be posted not less
20 than 10 days before the ~~recessed~~ runoff election.

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1 (f) The conduct of a ~~recessed~~ runoff election shall be as provided in this
2 chapter for general elections.

3 ~~(b) After the recount, the county clerk shall seal the ballots and other~~
4 ~~materials back in the containers and store them in the county clerk's vault until~~
5 ~~returned to the towns. The county clerk shall return all ballots to the respective~~
6 ~~town clerks after issuance of the court's judgment, together with a copy of the~~
7 ~~judgment. The respective town clerks or their designees shall transport the~~
8 ~~ballots to the towns from which they came.~~

9 ~~(e) The court shall send a certified copy of the judgment to the Secretary of~~
10 ~~State.~~

11 § 2602m. STORAGE AND RETURN OF ELECTION MATERIALS

12 (a)(1) After the recount, the county clerk shall store the sealed containers
13 and any other recount materials in the county clerk's vault until returned to the
14 towns.

15 (2) The county clerk shall release all containers to the respective town
16 clerks after issuance of the court's judgment, together with a copy of the
17 judgment.

18 (3) The respective town clerks or their designees shall transport the
19 containers to the towns from which they came.

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1 (C) The election of a ~~representative~~ Representative to the General
2 Assembly is not a “local election.”

3 * * *

4 * * * Registration of Voters * * *

5 Sec. 2. 17 V.S.A. § 2141 is amended to read:

6 § 2141. POSTING OF CHECKLIST

7 (a) At least 30 days before any local, primary, or general election, the town
8 clerk shall cause copies of the most recent checklist of the persons ~~qualified~~
9 registered to vote to be posted in two or more public places in the municipality
10 in addition to being posted at the town clerk’s office; however, in a
11 municipality having a population of less than 5,000 ~~qualified~~ registered voters,
12 only one checklist in addition to the one posted in the town clerk’s office need
13 be posted.

14 * * *

15 Sec. 3. 17 V.S.A. § 2154 is amended to read:

16 § 2154. STATEWIDE VOTER CHECKLIST

17 * * *

18 (b) A registered voter’s month and day of birth, driver’s license or
19 nondriver identification number, e-mail address, and the last four digits of ~~the~~

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1 applicant's his or her Social Security number shall be kept confidential and are
2 exempt from public copying and inspection under the Public Records Act.

3 (c) Any person wishing to obtain a copy of all of the statewide voter
4 checklist must swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury pursuant to 13 V.S.A.
5 chapter 65, that the person will not use the checklist for commercial purposes.
6 The affirmation shall be filed with the Secretary of State.

7 * * *

8 ~~(e)~~(d) ~~No~~ An elections official ~~may~~ shall not access the portion of the
9 statewide voter checklist that is exempt from public inspection pursuant to
10 1 V.S.A. § 317(c)(31), except for elections purposes.

11 Sec. 4. 1 V.S.A. § 317(c) is amended to read:

12 (c) The following public records are exempt from public inspection and
13 copying:

14 * * *

15 (31) Records of a registered voter's month and day of birth, ~~motor~~
16 ~~vehicle operator's~~ driver's license or nondriver identification number, e-mail
17 address, and the last four digits of ~~the applicant's~~ his or her Social Security
18 number contained in an application to the statewide voter checklist or the
19 statewide voter checklist established under 17 V.S.A. § 2154 or the failure to
20 register to vote under 17 V.S.A. § 2145a.

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* * *

* * * Political Parties * * *

Sec. 5. 17 V.S.A. § 2303 is amended to read:

§ 2303. TOWN CHAIR TO GIVE NOTICE

(a) The town chair or, if unavailable or if the records of the Secretary of State show there is no chair, any three voters of the town shall arrange to hold a caucus on the day designated by the State chair, in some public place within the town; and shall set the hour of the caucus.

(b)(1) At least five days before the day of the caucus, the town chair shall post a notice of the date, purpose, time, and place of the caucus in the town clerk's office and in at least one other public place in town.

(2) In towns of 3,000 or more population, he or she shall also publish the notice:

(A) in a newspaper having general circulation in the town; or

(B) in a nonpartisan electronic news media website that specializes in news of the State or the community.

(c) If three voters arrange to call the caucus, the voters shall designate one ~~of their number~~ person among them to perform the duties prescribed ~~above~~ in subsection (b) of this section for the town chair.

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1 * * * Primary Elections * * *

2 Sec. 6. 17 V.S.A. § 2353 is amended to read:

3 § 2353. PETITIONS TO PLACE NAMES ON BALLOT

4 (a) The name of any person shall be printed upon the primary ballot as a
5 candidate for nomination by any major political party for any office indicated,
6 if petitions containing the requisite number of signatures made by ~~legal~~
7 registered voters, in substantially the following form, are filed with the proper
8 official, together with the person’s written consent to having his or her name
9 printed on the ballot:

10 I join in a petition to place on the primary ballot of the party
11 the name of, whose residence is in the (city), (town) of
12 in the county of, for the office of to be
13 voted for on Tuesday, the day of August, 20; and I certify that
14 I am at the present time a registered voter and am qualified to vote for a
15 candidate for this office.

16 (b)(1) A person’s name shall not be listed as a candidate on the primary
17 ballot of more than one party in the same election.

18 (2) A person shall file a separate petition for each office for which he or
19 she seeks to be a candidate.

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1 Sec. 7. 17 V.S.A. § 2354 is amended to read:

2 § 2354. SIGNING PETITIONS

3 (a) Any number of voters may sign the same petition.

4 (b)(1) A voter's signature shall not be valid unless at the time he or she
5 signs, the voter is registered and qualified to vote for the candidate whose
6 petition he or she signs.

7 (2) Each voter shall indicate his or her town of residence next to his
8 signature.

9 (c) The signature of a voter on a candidate's petition does not necessarily
10 indicate that the voter supports the candidate. ~~A voter shall not sign more than~~
11 ~~one petition for the same office, unless more than one nomination is to be~~
12 ~~made, in which case he or she may sign as many petitions as there are~~
13 ~~nominations to be made for the same office.~~

14 (d) A petition shall contain the name of only one candidate.

15 Sec. 8. 17 V.S.A. § 2356 is amended to read:

16 § 2356. TIME FOR FILING PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF
17 NOMINATION

18 (a) Primary petitions for major party candidates and statements of
19 nomination for minor party and independent candidates shall be filed ~~no~~ not
20 sooner than the fourth Monday in April and not later than 5:00 p.m. on the

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1 fourth Thursday after the first Monday in May preceding the primary election
2 prescribed by section 2351 of this chapter, and not later than 5:00 p.m. of the
3 62nd day prior to the day of a special primary election.

4 (b) A petition or statement of nomination shall apply only to the election
5 cycle in which the petition or statement of nomination is filed.

6 Sec. 9. 17 V.S.A. § 2361 is amended to read:

7 § 2361. CONSENT OF CANDIDATE

8 (a) A candidate for whom petitions containing sufficient valid signatures
9 have been filed shall file with the official with whom the petitions were filed a
10 consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot. The ~~secretary of~~
11 ~~state~~ Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish forms for this purpose.

12 (b)(1) The consent shall set forth the name of the candidate, as the
13 candidate wishes to have it printed on the ballot, the candidate's town of
14 residence, and correct mailing address.

15 (2) If a candidate wishes to use a nickname, the format on the ballot
16 shall be the candidate's first name, the nickname set off in quotations, and the
17 candidate's last name.

18 (3) Professional titles such as "Dr.," "Esq.," or "CPA" shall not be used
19 as part of a candidate's name on the ballot.

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1 (c) The consent shall be filed on or before the day petitions are due. Unless
2 a consent is filed, the candidate's name shall not be printed on the primary
3 ballot.

4 Sec. 10. 17 V.S.A. § 2362 is amended to read:

5 § 2362. PRIMARY BALLOTS

6 (a) ~~The ballots shall be prepared~~ A separate ballot for each major political
7 party shall be printed and furnished to the towns by the Secretary of State and
8 shall contain the names of all candidates for nomination by that party at the
9 primary. Ballots shall be printed on index stock and configured to be readable
10 by vote tabulators. ~~A separate ballot for each major political party~~ Ballots
11 shall be printed in substantially the following form:

12 OFFICIAL VERMONT PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT

13 VOTE ON ONE PARTY BALLOT ONLY AND PLACE IN BALLOT

14 BOX OR VOTE TABULATOR

15 ALL OTHER PARTY BALLOTS MUST BE PLACED IN UNVOTED

16 BALLOT BOX

17 _____

18 [MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY NAME]

19 _____

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1 Instructions to voters: Use black pen or pencil to fill in the oval. To vote for a
2 ~~candidate~~ person whose name is printed on the ballot, fill in the oval ~~at~~ to the
3 right of ~~that person's name~~ the name of that person. To vote for a ~~candidate~~
4 person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write ~~the person's~~ or stick his
5 or her name ~~on~~ in the blank ~~line in the appropriate block and~~ space provided
6 and fill in the oval to the right of ~~that blank line~~ the write-in space. Do not
7 vote for more candidates than the "Vote for Not More Than" number for an
8 office. If you make a mistake, tear, or deface the ballot, return it to an election
9 official and obtain another ballot. Do not erase. ~~When there are two or more~~
10 ~~persons to be elected to one office, you may vote for any number of candidates~~
11 ~~up to and including the maximum number.~~

12 * * *

13 Sec. 11. 17 V.S.A. § 2363 is amended to read:

14 § 2363. ~~SEPARATE PARTY BALLOTS~~ VOTER'S CHOICE OF PARTY

15 (a) ~~The names of all candidates of a party shall be printed upon one ballot.~~
16 ~~Each section shall bear in print larger than any other print on the ballot the~~
17 ~~words VOTE IN ONE PARTY ONLY OR YOUR BALLOT WILL BE VOID~~
18 ~~in a prominent place on the ballot. The~~ A voter shall vote for the candidates of
19 one party only. A person voting at the primary shall not be required to indicate
20 his or her party choice to any election official.

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1 (b) [Repealed.]

2 Sec. 12. 17 V.S.A. § 2369 is amended to read:

3 § 2369. DETERMINING WINNER; TIE VOTES

4 (a) A person who receives a plurality of all the votes cast by a party in a
5 primary shall be a candidate of that party for the office designated on the
6 ballot.

7 (b)(1) If, after the period for requesting a recount under section 2602 of this
8 title has expired, no candidate has requested a recount and two or more
9 candidates of the same party are tied for the same office, the choice among
10 those tied shall be determined upon five days' notice and not later than 10 days
11 following the primary election by the committee of that party, which shall meet
12 to nominate a candidate from among the tied candidates. The committee that
13 nominates a candidate shall be as follows:

14 ~~(1)~~(A) the State committee of a party for a State or congressional office;

15 ~~(2)~~(B) the senatorial district committee for State Senate;

16 ~~(3)~~(C) the county committee for county office; or

17 ~~(4)~~(D) the representative district committee for a Representative to the
18 General Assembly.

19 ~~(e)~~(2) The committee chair shall certify the candidate nomination for the
20 general election to the Secretary of State within 48 hours of the nomination.

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1 * * * Nominations by Party Committee * * *

2 Sec. 13. 17 V.S.A. § 2381 is amended to read:

3 § 2381. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

4 (a) A candidate may also be nominated and have the candidate's name
5 printed on the general election ballot in accordance with the provisions set
6 forth in this subchapter, in the following instances:

7 (1) In case of a vacancy on the general election ballot occasioned by
8 death, removal, or withdrawal of a candidate, or the failure of a major political
9 party to nominate a candidate by primary;

10 (2) In case a minor political party desires to nominate a candidate for
11 any office for which major political parties nominate candidates by primary or
12 for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States;

13 (3) In case of nomination for the office of justice of the peace, in the
14 event that such nomination has not already been made by caucus as provided in
15 section 2413 of this chapter.

16 * * *

17 Sec. 14. 17 V.S.A. § 2382 is amended to read:

18 § 2382. WHICH COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE

19 Nominations of party candidates pursuant to this subchapter shall be made
20 by the following political committee of the party:

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1 (1) By the ~~state~~ State committee in the case of ~~state~~ President and Vice
2 President of the United States or State or congressional officers;

3 * * *

4 Sec. 15. 17 V.S.A. § 2386 is amended to read:

5 § 2386. TIME FOR FILING STATEMENTS

6 (a) In the case of the failure of a major political party to nominate a
7 candidate by primary, a statement shall be filed not later than 5:00 p.m. on the
8 sixth day following the primary.

9 (b) In the case of the death or withdrawal of a candidate after the primary
10 election, the party committee shall have seven days from the date of the death
11 or withdrawal to nominate a candidate. In no event, shall a statement be filed
12 later than 60 days prior to the general election.

13 (c)(1) In the case of a nomination by a minor political party, a statement
14 shall be filed as set forth in section 2356 of this chapter.

15 (2) A statement shall apply only to the election cycle in which the
16 statement is filed.

17 (d) In the case of a nomination for the office of justice of the peace, a
18 statement shall be filed as set forth in section 2413 of this chapter.

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1 * * * Independent Candidate Nominations * * *

2 Sec. 16. 17 V.S.A. § 2402 is amended to read:

3 § 2402. REQUISITES OF STATEMENT

4 (a) A statement of nomination shall contain:

5 (1) The name of the office for which the nomination is made.

6 (2) The candidate's name and residence.

7 (3) If desired, a name, or other identification (in not more than three
8 words) to be printed on the ballot following the candidate's name.

9 (4) In the case of nomination for President or Vice President of the
10 United States, ~~the~~:

11 (A) The name and state of residence of each candidate for such
12 office, together with the name, town of residence, and correct mailing address
13 of each nominee for the office of elector.

14 (B)(i) The original statement of nomination shall include a
15 certification by the town clerk of each town where the signers appear to be
16 voters that the persons whose names appear as signers of the statement are
17 registered voters in the town and of the total number of valid signers from the
18 town.

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1 (ii) Only the number of signers certified as registered voters by
 2 each town clerk on the original statement of nomination forms shall count
 3 toward the required number of signatures.

4 (C) The statement shall also be accompanied by a consent form from
 5 each nominee for elector. The consent form shall be similar to the consent
 6 form prescribed in section 2361 of this title.

7 * * *

8 (d)(1) A statement of nomination and a completed and signed consent form
 9 shall be filed:

10 (A) in the case of nomination for President or Vice President of the
 11 United States, ~~no sooner~~ not earlier than the fourth Monday in April and not
 12 later than 5:00 p.m. on the August 1 preceding the presidential general
 13 election;

14 (B) in the case of nomination for justice of the peace, ~~no~~ not earlier
 15 than the fourth Monday in April and not later than 5:00 p.m. on the third day
 16 following the primary election; or

17 (C) in the case of any other independent candidate, ~~no sooner than~~
 18 ~~the fourth Monday in April and not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday~~
 19 ~~preceding the primary election prescribed by section 2351 of this chapter, and~~

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1 ~~not later than 5:00 p.m. of the third day prior to the day of a special primary~~
2 ~~election in accordance with section 2356 of this chapter.~~

3 (2) ~~No~~ A public official receiving nominations shall not accept a petition
4 unless a completed and signed consent form is filed at the same time.

5 (3) A statement of nomination shall apply only to the election cycle in
6 which the statement of nomination is filed.

7 (e) The Secretary of State shall prescribe and furnish forms for a statement
8 of nomination.

9 (f) In the event that an independent vice presidential candidate withdraws
10 in accordance with section 2412 of this chapter, the presidential candidate may
11 submit to the Secretary of State on or before the ballot printing deadline a new
12 consent form signed by the presidential candidate and his or her new vice
13 presidential candidate.

14 Sec. 17. 17 V.S.A. § 2403 is amended to read:

15 § 2403. NUMBER OF CANDIDATES; PARTY NAMES

16 (a) A statement of nomination shall contain the name of only one
17 candidate, except in the case of presidential and ~~vice-presidential~~ vice
18 presidential candidates, who may be nominated by means of the same
19 statement of nomination. ~~A person shall not sign more than one statement of~~
20 ~~nomination for the same office.~~

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1 (b)(1) The political or other name on a statement of nomination shall be
2 substantially different from the name of any organized political party. It shall
3 also be substantially different from the political or other name already
4 appearing on any other statement of nomination for the same office then on file
5 with the same officer for the same election; ~~if~~.

6 (2) ~~If the secretary of state~~ Secretary of State determines that it is not
7 substantially different, the candidate named on the statement shall select a
8 different political or other name, otherwise the ~~secretary may reject the~~
9 ~~statement of nomination~~ Secretary shall print the word “Independent” on the
10 ballot for that candidate.

11 (c)(1) Except in the case of presidential and vice presidential candidates,
12 the word “independent” may not be used as part of a party name; ~~if~~.

13 (2) If no party is indicated, the word “Independent” shall be printed on
14 the ballot, ~~and no~~.

15 (3) A candidate appearing on the ballot as a candidate of a political party
16 shall not also appear on the ballot as an “Independent.”

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1 * * * Nominations; Miscellaneous * * *

2 Sec. 18. 17 V.S.A. § 2412 is amended to read:

3 § 2412. WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDACY

4 (a)(1) A candidate who has been validly nominated by one of the methods
5 prescribed in this chapter shall have a right to withdraw his or her candidacy
6 up until 5:00 p.m. on the ~~third~~ tenth day following the primary by filing a
7 written notice of withdrawal with the town clerk in the case of a candidate for
8 justice of the peace, and with the ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State in the
9 case of all other offices.

10 (2) The name of a candidate who has withdrawn in accordance with the
11 provisions of this subsection shall not be printed on the ballot.

12 (b) After ~~that~~ the date described in subdivision (a)(1) of this section, if the
13 candidate has filed a written notice of withdrawal, the town clerk or ~~secretary~~
14 ~~of state~~ Secretary of State may still remove the candidate’s name from the
15 ballot up until the printing deadline.

16 * * * Election Officials * * *

17 Sec. 20. 17 V.S.A. § 2455 is amended to read:

18 § 2455. ~~DUTIES OF ELECTION OFFICIALS; DUTIES; POLITICAL~~

19 PARTY REPRESENTATION

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1 (a) The assistant election officers, together with the presiding officer and
2 the board of civil authority, shall constitute the election officials.

3 (b) Except as may be specifically provided in this title, the presiding officer
4 shall notify each election official of the hours when he or she shall be present
5 to work at the polls and of the duties assigned to each election official.

6 (c) When the provisions of this title require two or more elections officials
7 of different political parties to perform an act, that political party
8 representation requirement shall not be required if attempts to conform to it
9 were not successful and those attempts were documented by the presiding
10 officer.

11 * * * General Election Ballots * * *

12 Sec. 19. 17 V.S.A. § 2472 is amended to read:

13 § 2472. CONTENTS

14 * * *

15 (b)(1) Each office to be voted upon shall be separately indicated and
16 preceded by the word “For,” as: “For United States Senator.” Beneath the
17 office to be voted upon shall appear the instructions: “Vote for not more than
18 (the number of candidates to be elected).”

19 (2) The names of the candidates for each office shall be listed in
20 alphabetical order by surname, followed by the candidate’s town of residence,

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1 and the party or parties by which the candidate has been nominated, or in the
2 case of independent candidates who have not chosen some other name or
3 identification, by the word “Independent.” The word “party” shall not be
4 printed on the ballot following a candidate’s party name.

5 * * *

6 * * * Vote Tabulators * * *

7 Sec. 21. 17 V.S.A. § 2491 is amended to read:

8 § 2491. POLITICAL SUBDIVISION; VOTE TABULATORS

9 (a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, a board of civil
10 authority may, at a meeting held not less than 60 days prior to an election and
11 warned pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 801, vote to require the political subdivision
12 for which it is elected to use vote tabulators for the registering and counting of
13 votes in subsequent local, primary, or general elections, or any combination of
14 those.

15 (b) A town with 1,000 or more registered voters as of December 31 in an
16 even-numbered ~~years~~ year shall use vote tabulators for the registering and
17 counting of votes in subsequent general elections.

18 (c)(1) The Office of the Secretary of State shall pay the following costs
19 associated with this section by using federal Help America Vote Act funds, as
20 available:

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1 (A) full purchase and warranty cost of vote tabulators, ballot boxes,
2 and two memory cards for each tabulator;

3 (B) annual maintenance costs of vote tabulators for each town; and

4 (C) the first \$500.00 of the first pair of a vote tabulator's memory
5 cards' configuration costs for each primary and general election.

6 (2) A town shall pay the remainder of any cost not covered by
7 subdivision (1) of this subsection.

8 **Sec. X. 17 V.S.A. § 2493 is amended to read:**

9 **§ 2493. RULES FOR USE OF VOTE TABULATORS; AUDITS**

10 (a) The Secretary of State shall adopt rules governing the use and the
11 selection of any vote tabulator in the State. These rules shall include
12 requirements that:

13 * * *

14 (4)(A) All vote tabulators shall be set to reject a ballot that contains an
15 overvote and ~~provide~~ the voter shall be provided the opportunity to obtain
16 another ballot and correct the overvote, ~~have the ballot declared spoiled, and~~
17 ~~obtain another ballot~~. If an early voter absentee ballot contains an overvote, the
18 elections official shall override the vote tabulator and count all races except
19 any race that contains an overvote.

20 * * *

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* * * Polling Places * * *

Sec. 22. 17 V.S.A. § 2508 is amended to read:

§ 2508. CAMPAIGNING DURING POLLING HOURS; VOTER ACCESS

(a)(1) The presiding officer shall ~~insure~~ ensure during polling hours on the day of the election that:

~~(1)(A)~~ Within the building containing a polling place, no campaign literature, stickers, buttons, name stamps, information on write-in candidates, or other political materials are displayed, placed, handed out, or allowed to remain; ~~and~~

~~(2)(B)~~ Within the building containing a polling place, no candidate, election official, or other person distributes election materials, solicits voters regarding an item or candidate on the ballot, or otherwise campaigns; and

~~(3)(C)~~ On the walks and driveways leading to a building in which a polling place is located, no candidate or other person ~~may~~ physically ~~interfere~~ interferes with the progress of a voter to and from the polling place.

(2) The provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection shall apply to the town clerk’s office during any period of early or absentee voting.

(b) During polling hours, the presiding officer shall control the placement of signs on the property of the polling place in a fair manner.

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1 (c) The provisions of this section shall be posted in the notice required by
2 section 2521 of this title.

3 * * * Voter Information * * *

4 **Sec. X. 17 V.S.A. § 2521 is amended to read:**

5 **§ 2521. WARNINGS AND NOTICES**

6 (a) Not less than 30 days before the election, the town clerk shall cause a
7 warning and notice to be posted informing the voters of the town about the
8 election.

9 (1) The warning shall include the date and time of the election, location
10 of the polling place or places, nature of the election, and offices or questions to
11 be voted upon.

12 (2) The notice shall contain information on voter registration and early
13 or absentee voting, on how to obtain ballots, mark them, get help marking
14 them, and obtain new ballots ~~in place of those accidentally spoiled~~ if an error is
15 made; information about offenses relating to elections; how to get help if there
16 is a problem on election day; instructions for registrants by mail; instructions
17 for first-time voters; instructions on who may cast a provisional ballot;
18 instructions on how to cast a provisional ballot; information on federal and
19 state laws prohibiting fraud and misrepresentation; instructions on how to

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1 contact the appropriate official if a person believes any of his or her rights to
2 vote have been violated; and other appropriate information.

3 (3) The warning and notice shall be posted in at least two public places
4 within each town and in or near the town clerk's office. If a town has more
5 than one polling place, the warning and notice shall be posted in at least two
6 public places within each voting district and in or near the town clerk's office.

7 (4) The checklist shall also be posted as required in section 2141 of this
8 title.

9 * * *

10 * * * Early or Absentee Voters * * *

11 Sec. 23. 17 V.S.A. § 2531 is amended to read:

12 § 2531. APPLICATION FOR EARLY VOTER ABSENTEE BALLOT

13 (a)(1) A voter who expects to be an early or absentee voter, or an
14 authorized person on behalf of such voter, may apply for an early voter
15 absentee ballot until 5:00 p.m. or the closing of the town clerk's office on the
16 day preceding the election.

17 (2) If a town clerk does not have regular office hours ~~on the day before~~
18 ~~the election~~, and the office will not otherwise be open on the day preceding the
19 election, an application may be filed until the closing of the clerk's office on
20 the last day that office has hours preceding the election.

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1 (b) All applications shall be filed with the town clerk of the town in which
2 the early or absentee voter is registered to vote. The town clerk shall file
3 written applications and memoranda of verbal applications in his or her office,
4 and shall retain the applications and memoranda for 90 days following the
5 election, at which time they may be destroyed.

6 (c) Voting by early voter absentee ballot shall be allowed only in elections
7 using the Australian ballot system.

8 Sec. 24. 17 V.S.A. § 2532 is amended to read:

9 § 2532. APPLICATIONS; FORM

10 (a)(1) An early or absentee voter, or an authorized family member or health
11 care provider acting in the voter’s behalf, may apply for an early voter
12 absentee ballot by telephone, in person, or in writing. “Family member” here
13 means a person’s spouse, children, brothers, sisters, parents, spouse’s parents,
14 grandparents, and spouse’s grandparents. Any other authorized person may
15 apply in writing or in person; provided, however, that voter authorization to
16 such a person shall not be given by response to a robotic phone call or by
17 response to a group e-mail.

18 (2) The application shall be in substantially the following form:

19 REQUEST FOR EARLY VOTER ABSENTEE BALLOT

20 Name of early or absentee voter: _____

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1 Voter's Town of Residence: _____

2 Current physical address (address where you reside): _____

3 Residence (if different): _____

4 Telephone Number: _____ E-mail Address: _____

5 Date: _____

6 I request early voter absentee ballot(s) for the election(s) checked below:

7 (1) Annual Town Meeting;

8 (2) All other local elections;

9 (3) August Primary Election;

10 (4) Presidential Primary (YOU MUST SELECT PARTY);

11 (5) November General Election

12 (6) All elections in this calendar year

13 Please deliver the ballot(s) as indicated below (check one):

14 (1) Mail to voter at: _____

15 Street or P.O. Box Town/City State Zip Code

16 (2) Delivery by two Justices of the Peace (this may only be selected if you

17 are ill or if you have a physical disability).

18 If applicant is other than early or absentee voter:

19 Name of applicant: _____

20 Address of applicant: _____

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1 Relationship to early or absentee voter: _____

2 Organization, if applicable: _____

3 Date: _____ Signature of applicant: _____

4 (3) If the application is made by telephone or in writing, the information
5 supplied must be in substantial conformance with the information requested on
6 this form.

7 * * *

8 (d) An application for an early voter absentee ballot shall be valid for ~~only~~
9 ~~one election, unless specific request is made by an early or absentee voter that~~
10 ~~the application be valid for both a primary election, excluding a presidential~~
11 ~~primary, and the general election next following the elections~~ or timeframe
12 specified by the applicant, ~~as long as both all ballots are to be mailed to the~~
13 ~~same address.~~

14 (e) A single application may only be valid for any elections within the
15 same calendar year.

16 * * *

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1 Sec. 25. 17 V.S.A. § 2537 is amended to read:

2 § 2537. EARLY OR ABSENTEE VOTING IN THE TOWN CLERK'S
3 OFFICE

4 (a)(1) A voter may, if he or she chooses, apply in person to the town clerk
5 for the early voter absentee ballots and envelopes rather than having them
6 mailed as required by section 2539 of this ~~title~~ subchapter.

7 (2) In this case, the clerk shall furnish the early voter absentee ballots
8 and envelopes when a valid application has been made.

9 (3) The voter may mark his or her ballots, ~~seal~~ place them in the
10 envelope, sign the certificate, and return the ballots in the ~~sealed~~ envelope
11 containing the certificate to the town clerk or an assistant town clerk, without
12 leaving the office of the town clerk, or the voter may take the ballots and return
13 them to the town clerk in the same manner as if the ballots had been received
14 by mail.

15 (b) No person, except justices of the peace as provided in section 2538 of
16 this ~~title~~ subchapter, may take any ballot from the town clerk on behalf of any
17 other person.

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1 Sec. 26. 17 V.S.A. § 2540 is amended to read:

2 § 2540. INSTRUCTIONS TO BE SENT WITH BALLOTS

3 (a) The town clerk shall send with all early voter absentee ballots and
4 envelopes printed instructions, which may be included on the envelope, in
5 substantially the following form:

6 INSTRUCTIONS FOR EARLY OR ABSENTEE VOTERS

7 1. Mark the ballots.

8 2. ~~Seal~~ Place them in this envelope.

9 3. Fill out and sign the certificate on the envelope.

10 4. Mail or deliver the ~~sealed~~ envelope containing the ballots to the town
11 clerk of the town where you are a registered voter in time to arrive ~~no~~ not later
12 than election day.

13 Note: If these ballots have been brought to you personally by two justices of
14 the peace because of your illness or physical disability, just return them to the
15 justices after you have ~~sealed and~~ signed the envelope. YOU HAVE THE
16 RIGHT TO MARK YOUR BALLOTS IN PRIVATE - but if you ask for help
17 in filling out the ballots, they will give it to you.

18 BE SURE TO FILL OUT AND SIGN THE CERTIFICATE ON THIS

19 ENVELOPE OR YOUR VOTE WILL NOT COUNT!

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1 * * *

2 Sec. X. 17 V.S.A. § 2541 is amended to read:

3 § 2541. MARKING OF BALLOTS

4 * * *

5 (c) If an early or absentee voter ~~spoils~~ makes an error in marking a ballot,
6 the voter may return the spoiled ballot by mail or in person to the town clerk
7 and receive another ballot, consistent with the provisions of section 2568 of
8 this title.

9 Sec. 27. 17 V.S.A. § 2543 is amended to read:

10 § 2543. RETURN OF BALLOTS

11 (a) After marking the ballots and signing the certificate on the envelope,
12 the early or absentee voter to whom the same are addressed shall return the
13 ballots to the clerk of the town in which he or she is a voter, in the manner
14 prescribed, except that in the case of a voter to whom ballots are delivered by
15 justices, the ballots shall be returned to the justices calling upon him or her,
16 and they shall deliver them to the town clerk.

17 (b) Once an early voter absentee ballot has been returned to the clerk in the
18 ~~sealed~~ envelope with the signed certificate, it shall be stored in a secure place
19 and shall not be returned to the voter for any reason.

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1 (c) If a ballot includes more than one page, the early or absentee voter need
2 only return the page upon which the voter has marked his or her vote.

3 (d)(1) All early voter absentee ballots returned to the clerk before the polls
4 close on election day as follows shall be counted:

5 (A) by any means, to the town clerk's office before the close of
6 business on the day preceding the election;

7 (B) by mail, to the town clerk's office before the close of the polls on
8 the day of the election; and

9 (C) by hand delivery to the presiding officer at the voter's polling
10 place.

11 (2) An early voter absentee ballot returned in a manner other than those
12 set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall not be counted.

13 Sec. 28. 17 V.S.A. § 2546 is amended to read:

14 § 2546. DEPOSIT OF EARLY VOTER ABSENTEE BALLOTS IN

15 BALLOT BOX OR VOTE TABULATOR

16 ~~(a)(1)(A) No sooner~~ Not earlier than 30 days before the opening of polls on
17 election day, the town clerk ~~of a municipality with at least 300 registered~~
18 ~~voters on its checklist~~ may direct two election officials working together to do
19 all of the following:

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1 (1) open the outside envelope ~~in order to~~ and sort early voter absentee
2 ballots by ward and district, ~~may data enter the return of the ballots by the~~
3 ~~voter, may~~ if necessary;

4 (2) determine that the certificate has been properly completed and
5 signed;

6 (3) check the name of the early voter off the entrance checklist; and ~~may~~

7 (4) place the ~~inside~~ certificate envelopes ~~in various secure containers~~
8 into a secure container marked “checked in early voter absentee ballots” to be
9 transported to the polling places on election day.

10 ~~(B) No sooner than 48 hours before the opening of polls on election~~
11 ~~day, a town clerk in all other municipalities may direct two election officials~~
12 ~~working together to open the outside envelope and remove the certificate~~
13 ~~envelope in order to determine that an early voter absentee ballot certificate~~
14 ~~has been properly signed by the early voter, and that the name of the early~~
15 ~~voter appears on the checklist.~~

16 ~~(2) The election officials shall check the name of the early voter off the~~
17 ~~entrance checklist and place the sealed envelope into a secure container~~
18 ~~marked “checked in early voter absentee ballots” to be transported to the~~
19 ~~polling place on election day.~~

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1 ~~(3) Upon opening of the polls on election day, ballots from this~~
2 ~~container shall be opened by election officials, who are not members of the~~
3 ~~same political party, and deposited either into the ballot box or into the vote~~
4 ~~tabulator.~~

5 (b) The town clerk or presiding officer shall deliver the unopened early
6 voter absentee ballots to the election officials at the place where the entrance
7 checklist is located. Upon the opening of the polls on election day:

8 (1) If the ballots are in a container marked “checked in early voter
9 absentee ballots,” ~~two~~ one election officials from different political parties
10 official shall open the certificate envelopes, turn the certificate side face down,
11 and hand the envelope face down to a second election official from a different
12 political party, who shall remove the ballots from the envelopes and deposit the
13 ~~ballots into~~ them in the ballot box or ~~into the~~ vote tabulator.

14 (2) If the ballots have not been previously checked off the entrance
15 checklist and if ~~an~~ two election ~~official~~ determines officials, from different
16 political parties, determine that the certificate on the envelope is properly
17 completed and signed by the early voter, the name of the early voter appears on
18 the checklist, and the early voter is not a first-time voter in the municipality
19 who registered by mail and is marked on the checklist as requiring additional
20 documentation, the election ~~official~~ officials shall mark the checklist, open the

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1 ~~envelope~~ certificate envelope, turn the certificate side face down, and hand the
2 envelope face down to a third election official who shall remove the ballots
3 from the envelopes and deposit the ~~ballot~~ ballots in the ~~proper~~ ballot box or
4 vote tabulator.

5 (3)(A) If the early voter is a first-time voter who registered by mail, ~~the~~
6 two election official officials from different political parties shall determine
7 whether the identification required under subdivision 2563(1) of this title has
8 been submitted by the voter. Upon ascertaining that the proper identification
9 has been submitted by the voter, the election ~~official~~ officials shall mark the
10 checklist, open the certificate envelope, turn the certificate side face down, and
11 hand the envelope face down to a third election official who shall remove the
12 ballots from the envelopes and deposit the ballot in the ~~proper~~ ballot box or
13 vote tabulator.

14 (B) If the proper identification has not been submitted, the ballot
15 shall be treated as a provisional ballot, as provided in subchapter 6A of this
16 chapter.

17 (c) All early voter absentee ballots shall be commingled with the ballots of
18 voters who have voted in person.

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1 Sec. 29. 17 V.S.A. § 2546a is amended to read:

2 § 2546a. DAY PRECEDING ELECTION; DEPOSIT OF EARLY VOTER

3 ABSENTEE BALLOTS IN VOTE TABULATOR

4 * * *

5 (d) Count and inspection.

6 (1) On the day preceding the election, at least one hour prior to
7 depositing the ballots in the vote tabulator, the town clerk and the election
8 officials shall:

9 ~~(1)(A)~~ first open the secure container marked “checked in early voter
10 absentee ballots,” count the sealed certificate envelopes containing those
11 ballots, and record the number counted; and

12 ~~(2)(B)~~ permit these sealed certificate envelopes to be inspected by
13 members of the public.

14 (2) Any early voter absentee ballot that is returned after the expiration of
15 the period for the count and inspection shall be processed on the day of the
16 election in accordance with section 2546 of this subchapter.

17 (e) Processing.

18 (1) Immediately after the expiration of the period for the count and
19 inspection described in subsection (d) of this section, the town clerk and
20 election officials shall open each sealed certificate envelope containing an

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1 early voter absentee ballot that was counted under subdivision (d)(1) of this
2 section and deposit each ballot into a vote tabulator.

3 (2) The town clerk and the election officials shall ensure that all
4 procedures for handling ballots are followed to the fullest extent practicable.

5 (3) At the end of the processing, the town clerk shall verify that the vote
6 tabulator's memory card is locked in place and shall sign a statement verifying
7 how many early voter absentee ballots were counted by the vote tabulator and
8 that the memory card is so locked. The town clerk shall compare the vote
9 tabulator's number of counted ballots to the original count of those ballots
10 described in ~~subsection (d)~~ subdivision (d)(1) of this section.

11 * * *

12 Sec. 30. 17 V.S.A. § 2547 is amended to read:

13 § 2547. DEFECTIVE BALLOTS

14 (a) If upon examination by the election officials it shall appear that any of
15 the following defects is present, either the ballot or the unopened certificate
16 envelope shall be marked "defective" and the ballot shall not be counted:

17 (1) the early or absentee voter is not legally qualified to vote,~~or;~~

18 (2) the early or absentee voter has voted in person,~~or that;~~

19 (3) the affidavit on any the certificate envelope is insufficient, not
20 completed;

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- 1 (4) the certificate is not signed, ~~or~~;
- 2 (5) the voted ballot is not in the ~~voted ballot~~ certificate envelope; or,
- 3 (6) in the case of a primary vote, the early or absentee voter has failed to
- 4 return the unvoted primary ballots, ~~such envelope shall be marked “defective,”~~
- 5 ~~and the ballots inside shall not be counted and.~~

6 **(b) Each defective ballot or unopened certificate envelope shall be:**

- 7 (A) affixed with a note from the presiding officer indicating the
- 8 reason it was determined to be defective;
- 9 (B) placed with other such defective ballots in an envelope marked
- 10 “Defective Ballots – Voter Checked Off Checklist - Do Not Count”; and
- 11 (C) ~~shall be returned in the unopened~~ that envelope to the town clerk
- 12 in the manner prescribed by section 2590 of this title.

13 (c) The provisions of this section shall be indicated prominently in the early

14 or absentee voter material prepared by the Secretary of State.

15 **Sec. X. 17 V.S.A. § 2548 is amended to read:**

16 **§ 2548. VOTING IN PERSON**

17 * * *

18 (b)(1) A person who in good faith has received early voter absentee ballots

19 for his or her use but has not yet marked them, if he or she is able to vote in

20 person, may cast the early voter absentee ballots as provided above, or may

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1 vote in person after returning the complete set of unmarked ballots, together
2 with the envelope intended for their return, to the presiding officer at the time
3 the voter appears to vote in person.

4 (2) If a person does not have his or her absentee ballots to return, the
5 person shall be checked off the checklist and permitted to vote only after
6 completing a sworn affidavit that he or she does not have his or her absentee
7 ballots to return.

8 (3) The presiding officer shall return the unused early voter absentee
9 ballots and envelope to the town clerk, who shall make a record of their return
10 on the list of early or absentee voters and treat them as ~~spoiled or unused~~
11 replaced ballots, pursuant to section 2568 of this title.

12 * * * Provisional Voting * * *

13 Sec. 32. 17 V.S.A. § 2555 is amended to read:

14 § 2555. PROVISIONAL BALLOT ENVELOPES

15 The clerk shall deliver to each polling place on the date of the election a
16 sufficient number of provisional ballot envelopes printed with a voter
17 attestation. The attestation shall include:

18 * * *

19 (4) A statement informing the provisional voter: "~~Provisional balloting~~
20 ~~allows a provisional voter only to vote in federal elections. If you wish to vote~~

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1 ~~in any other State or local election, you should return this form to the elections~~
2 ~~officials and file an appeal in Superior Court in the county in which you live~~
3 ~~pursuant to section 2148 of this title.~~ If you choose to vote by provisional
4 ballot, after the close of the polls, the town clerk will determine whether you
5 meet all eligibility requirements. If the clerk denies your application, he or she
6 will inform you that the application has been denied.”

7 * * * Process of Voting * * *

8 Sec. 31. 17 V.S.A. § 2563 is amended to read:

9 § 2563. ADMITTING VOTER

10 Before a person may be admitted to vote, he or she shall announce his or
11 her name and, if requested, his or her place of residence in a clear and audible
12 tone of voice, or present his or her name in writing, or otherwise identify
13 himself or herself by appropriate documentation. The election officials
14 attending the entrance of the polling place shall then verify that the person’s
15 name appears on the checklist for the polling place.

16 (1) If the name does appear, and if no one immediately challenges the
17 person’s right to vote on grounds of identity or having previously voted in the
18 same election, the election officials shall repeat the name of the person and:

19 (A)(i) If the checklist indicates that the person is a first-time voter in
20 the municipality who registered by mail, whose driver’s license, nondriver

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1 identification number, or last four digits of his or her Social Security number
2 provided by the applicant have not been verified by the Secretary of State, and
3 who has not provided required identification before the opening of the polls,
4 require the person to present any one of the following: a valid photo
5 identification; a copy of a current utility bill; a copy of a current bank
6 statement; or a copy of a government check, paycheck, or any other
7 government document that shows the current name and address of the voter.

8 * * *

9 Sec. 33. 17 V.S.A. § 2564 is amended to read:

10 § 2564. CHALLENGES

11 (a)(1)(A) Each organized political party, each candidate on the ballot not
12 representing an organized political party, and each committee supporting or
13 opposing any public question on the ballot shall have the right to have not
14 more than two representatives for each ~~entrance checklist table~~ voting district
15 in a polling place but outside the guardrail for the purpose of observing the
16 voting process and challenging the right of any person to vote.

17 (B) In no event shall such representatives be permitted to interfere
18 with the orderly conduct of the election, and the presiding officer shall have
19 authority to impose reasonable rules for the preservation of order.

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1 (C) However, in all cases the representatives shall have the right to
2 hear or see the name of a person seeking to vote, and they shall have the right
3 to make an immediate challenge to a person’s right to vote.

4 (2) The grounds of challenge of a person whose name appears on the
5 checklist shall be only:

6 ~~(1)~~(A) that he or she is not, in fact, the person whose name appears on
7 the checklist; or

8 ~~(2)~~(B) that he or she has previously voted in the same election.

9 (b) If a challenge is issued, the members of the board of civil authority
10 present in the polling place shall immediately convene, informally hear the
11 facts, and decide whether the challenge should be sustained.

12 (1) If the board overrules the challenge, the person shall immediately be
13 admitted within the guardrail and permitted to vote.

14 (2) If the board sustains the challenge, the person shall not be admitted
15 unless, before the polls close, he or she shall obtain a court order directing that
16 he or she be permitted to vote.

17 Sec. 34. 17 V.S.A. § 2566 is amended to read:

18 § 2566. MARKING BALLOTS

19 On receiving his or her ballots, the voter shall forthwith, and without
20 leaving the polling place or going outside the guardrail, proceed to one of the

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1 booths not occupied by any other person and vote by filling in the appropriate
2 square or oval opposite the name of the candidate of his or her choice for each
3 office, or by ~~filling~~ writing in the name of the candidate of his or her choice in
4 the blank space provided and filling in the square or oval to the right of that
5 blank space.

6 Sec. 35. 17 V.S.A. § 2568 is amended to read:

7 § 2568. ~~SPOILED~~ REMOVING BALLOTS FROM POLLING PLACE;
8 REPLACEMENT, BLANK, AND UNUSED BALLOTS

9 (a) Removing ballots from polling place. A person shall not take or
10 remove a ballot from the polling place before the close of the polls.

11 (b) Replacement ballots.

12 (1) If a voter ~~spoils~~ desires a replacement ballot, he or she may obtain
13 ~~others~~ another, one at a time, not exceeding three in all, upon each time
14 returning to an election official the ~~spoiled one~~ previous ballot he or she was
15 provided.

16 (2) If a ballot is returned to an election official by a voter desiring a
17 replacement ballot, the ballot returned by the voter shall be immediately
18 delivered to the presiding officer or his or her designee and shall be
19 immediately marked “Do Not Count—Voter Received Replacement Ballot”
20 and placed in an envelope containing all ballots returned by the voters that is

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1 clearly marked “Do Not Count—Replaced Ballots.” At the close of the polls,
2 this envelope shall be sealed and delivered to the clerk pursuant to section
3 2590 of this chapter. If a person fails to use a ballot, he or she shall deliver it
4 to the presiding officer before going outside the guardrail.

5 (c) ~~Spoiled and unused Unused~~ ballots shall be immediately canceled and,
6 ~~together with those.~~ Ballots originally delivered to the presiding officer ~~which~~
7 that remain undistributed to the voters; shall be preserved and returned to the
8 town clerks; ~~in the same manner provided for in section 2590 of this title,~~ and
9 the clerk shall preserve them in such condition, unless called for by some
10 authority entitled to demand and receive them. After 90 days from the date the
11 election is held, they may be destroyed or distributed by the town clerk for
12 educational purposes or for any other purpose the town clerk deems
13 appropriate.

14 Sec. 36. 17 V.S.A. § 2570 is amended to read:

15 § 2570. DEPOSITING BALLOTS

16 (a) In primary elections, the voter shall first hand any unvoted primary
17 ballots to the appropriate election official, who shall deposit those ballots in a
18 receptacle marked for unvoted primary ballots. The voter shall then deposit
19 the voted ballot in the ballot box or vote tabulator, unless the voter requires
20 assistance in depositing the ballot.

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* * * Count and Return of Votes * * *

Sec. 37. 17 V.S.A. § 2586 is amended to read:

§ 2586. ~~SECRETARY OF STATE TO PREPARE FORMS~~ TALLY SHEETS; SUMMARY SHEETS; RETURNS

The ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State shall design, prepare, and distribute a sufficient supply of the following forms, which ~~shall~~ may be used in each polling place during the counting process:

(1) Tally sheets.

(A) These sheets shall provide a place to identify the office or question for which the ballots are being counted, the name of each candidate for that office, and the signature of the pair of election officials actually counting the ballots.

(B) Votes for each candidate or question shall be recorded on the tally sheets by means of “tick” marks or some other convenient system, and the total shall then be written on the tally sheet.

(C) Blank votes (undervotes) and ~~spoiled ballots~~ overvotes shall be indicated.

(D) ~~All~~ In towns that count ballots by hand, all votes must be accounted for on the tally sheets.

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Sec. 38. 17 V.S.A. § 2587 is amended to read:

§ 2587. RULES FOR COUNTING ~~BALLOTS~~ VOTES

(a)(1) In counting ~~ballots~~ votes, election officials shall attempt to ascertain the intent of the voter, as expressed by markings on the ballot ~~which~~ and in a manner that is consistent with guidance that shall be adopted by rule by the Secretary of State. ~~The Secretary shall adopt, by rule, guidance on determining whether a ballot is spoiled.~~

(2) If it is impossible to determine the intent of the voter for any office or public question, the ~~ballot~~ vote shall be counted as a blank or spoiled overvote, as the case may be, for that office or question; but that determination shall not control any other office or question appearing on the ballot for which the voter's intent can be determined.

(3) If they have any doubt about the intent of the voter or any other question about a ~~ballot~~ vote, the election officials counting the ~~ballot~~ vote shall bring it to the presiding officer, who shall present the question of how to treat the ~~ballot~~ vote to the assembled election officials. The decision of how to treat the ~~ballot~~ vote shall be made by majority vote of the election officials who are present.

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1 (b) If the voter marks more names than there are persons to be elected to an
2 office, or marks contradictory sides on any public question, ~~his or her ballot~~
3 ~~shall not be counted for that office or public question~~ overvotes equal to the
4 number of candidates to be elected to the office must be recorded on the tally
5 sheet for that office or question.

6 (c)(1) A write-in vote for a candidate whose name is preprinted on the
7 ballot shall be counted as a vote for that candidate.

8 (2) A person who receives more than one vote for the same office on
9 any ballot shall be entitled to one vote, and one vote only.

10 (d) If the board of civil authority decides by majority vote of those present
11 that any markings on a ballot were made for the purpose of enabling it to be
12 identified and the vote traced, so as to defeat the secrecy of the ballot;

13 (1) that ballot shall be:

14 (A) rejected;

15 (B) marked defective and affixed with a note from the presiding
16 officer as to why it was marked defective; and

17 (C) placed in the defective ballot envelope in accordance with
18 subsection 2547(b) of this chapter; and

19 (2) the election officials shall may edit the vote tabulator totals reported
20 on the vote tabulator tape, as necessary. ~~The board shall make a record of the~~

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1 ~~rejection and the reason for it, and shall preserve the record with the ballot in~~
2 ~~question.~~

3 (e)(1) In the case of “write-in” votes, the act of writing in the name of a
4 candidate, or pasting a label containing a candidate’s name upon the ballot,
5 without other indications of the voter’s intent, shall constitute a vote for that
6 candidate, even though the voter did not fill in the square or oval after the
7 name.

8 (2) The election officials counting ballots and tallying results shall list
9 every person who receives a “write-in” vote and the number of votes received.

10 (A) On each tally sheet, the counters shall add together the names of
11 candidates that are clearly the same person, even though a nickname or last
12 name is used.

13 (B) Names of fictitious or deceased persons shall not be listed and
14 shall be recorded on the tally sheet as a blank vote.

15 * * *

16 Sec. 39. 17 V.S.A. § 2588 is amended to read:

17 § 2588. FILING RETURNS

18 For any primary or general election:

19 ~~(a)~~(1)(A) In towns that count all ballots by hand, as the count of votes for
20 each office or public question is completed, the presiding officer and at least

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1 one other election official shall collect the tally sheets, enter the totals shown
2 on the tally sheets upon the summary sheets, add and enter the sum of the
3 figures, and sign the summary sheets.

4 (B) As each summary sheet is completed, the presiding officer shall
5 publicly announce the results.

6 ~~(b)(2)(A)~~ In towns that use vote tabulators, after the close of the polls and
7 after all remaining absentee or transfer ballots have been fed into the vote
8 tabulator, the presiding officer shall insert the ender card and the tabulator will
9 print a tape of unofficial results. The presiding officer shall print at least ~~two~~
10 one additional ~~copies~~ copy of the tabulator tape.

11 (B) The unofficial results from the tape may be publicly announced,
12 and one copy of the printed tape may be posted in the polling place upon a
13 placard that clearly states: “Unofficial incomplete results.”

14 ~~(e) For any primary or general election:~~

15 ~~(4)(3)~~ The town clerk shall report as soon as practicable on the day of
16 the election the unofficial vote counts of all candidates whose names appeared
17 on the ballot to the Secretary of State. The report shall be made by
18 electronically submitting the vote counts on the Secretary’s online elections
19 reporting system or, if unable to submit electronically, by submitting those
20 vote counts to the Secretary of State by telephone, facsimile, or e-mail.

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1 ~~(2)~~(4) The Secretary shall ensure that any vote counts submitted by
2 telephone, facsimile, or e-mail are entered into his or her online elections
3 reporting system as soon as practicable after he or she receives them.

4 ~~(3)~~(5) The Secretary's online elections reporting system shall cause the
5 unofficial vote counts to be posted immediately on the Secretary's official
6 website as soon as those vote counts are submitted.

7 ~~(4)~~(6)(A) The presiding officer and one other election official then shall
8 proceed either to complete the return at once, or to store the summary sheets in
9 a safe and secure place until their retrieval for completion of the return. In any
10 event, ~~no~~ not later than ~~24~~ 48 hours after the polls close, the presiding officer
11 and at least one other election official shall transfer the totals from the
12 summary sheets to the proper spaces on the return, and both shall sign the
13 return.

14 (B) The town clerk shall store the summary sheets safely so that the
15 public cannot reasonably have access to them for a period of 90 days without
16 the town clerk's consent.

17 (C) The original of the return shall be delivered to the town clerk. In
18 a manner prescribed by the Secretary of State and within 48 hours of the close
19 of the polls, the town clerk shall deliver to the Secretary of State, the senatorial
20 district clerk, the county clerk, and the representative district clerk one certified

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1 copy each of the return. The town clerk shall also make a copy available to the
2 public upon request.

3 Sec. 40. 17 V.S.A. § 2590 is amended to read:

4 § 2590. SECURING AND STORING BALLOTS, TALLY SHEETS, AND
5 CHECKLISTS

6 (a)(1) The presiding officer shall collect and deliver to the town clerk,
7 securely sealed in the containers described in subsection (b) of this section, the
8 following:

9 (A) packages of counted ballots;

10 (B) envelopes containing ballots that have been replaced and
11 defective ballots;

12 (C) the exit checklist, if present or a copy of the entrance checklist;

13 (D) tally sheets;

14 (E) in the case of a primary election, ballots from the unvoted ballot
15 box, which shall be clearly separated from the ballots from the voted ballot box
16 and clearly marked as unvoted ballots; and

17 (F) other election material shall be collected by the presiding officer
18 and delivered to the town clerk, securely sealed in the containers provided for
19 in subsection (b) of this section.

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1 (2) If the material collected from one polling place is sealed in more
2 than one container, the presiding officer shall ensure that there shall be
3 attached to the container in which the exit checklist or copy of the entrance
4 checklists are located a tag stating that the checklist or checklists are in that
5 container.

6 (3) The form of the seal shall be designated and furnished by the
7 ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State in sufficient quantities to each town clerk.
8 The ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State shall require that all seals be safely
9 kept and fully accounted for.

10 (4) The following shall not be placed in a sealed container, but shall be
11 delivered to the town clerk along with the sealed containers:

12 (A) ballots that were never distributed to voters;

13 (B) any vote tabulator memory card; and

14 (C) the original entrance checklist ~~shall also be forwarded to the town~~
15 clerk.

16 (b) A copy of the entrance checklist shall be placed in the outside pocket of
17 the sealed container or otherwise stored along with but outside of the sealed
18 container for delivery to the court in the event of a recount.

19 (c) The ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State shall furnish to all town clerks
20 sufficient quantities of uniform-style containers. The ~~secretary of state~~

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1 Secretary shall establish a method by which the outside of each container shall
2 indicate the contents of the container, the town to which it belongs, and such
3 other pertinent information as may be required.

4 ~~(e)~~(d)(1) The ~~presiding officer shall return all sealed containers to the town~~
5 clerk, ~~who~~ shall safely store ~~them~~ the sealed containers and shall not permit
6 them to be removed from his or her custody or tampered with in any way.

7 (2)(A) In the event that a ballot bag or container breaks, splits, or opens
8 through handling, or in the event the original entrance checklist or a vote
9 tabulator memory card was inadvertently sealed in a ballot bag or container,
10 the town clerk shall notify the ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State in writing,
11 and the ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary shall order the town clerk in the presence of
12 two other town election officials who are not members of the same political
13 party to open the bag to remove the entrance checklist or to move the entire
14 contents to new bags or containers, affix new seals, and transmit the new seal
15 numbers.

16 (B) Ballot bags or containers shall not be removed or tampered with
17 in any other way, except under court order, or by order of any authorized
18 committee of the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly.

19 (C) If necessary for safe storage of the containers, the town clerk may
20 store them in a bank vault or other secure place, within or ~~without~~ outside the

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1 town, provided that access to them cannot reasonably be had without the town
2 clerk's consent.

3 * * *

4 Sec. 41. 17 V.S.A. § 2592 is amended to read:

5 § 2592. CANVASSING COMMITTEES; CANVASS OF VOTES IN
6 GENERAL OR SPECIAL ELECTIONS

7 (a) For all ~~state~~ State and national offices and statewide public questions,
8 the ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State and the chair of the ~~state~~ State
9 committee of each major political party (or designee) shall constitute a
10 canvassing committee to receive and tally returns and issue certificates.

11 (b) For all county offices (~~except justice of the peace~~) and countywide
12 public questions, the county clerk and the chair of the county committee of
13 each major political party (or designee) shall constitute a canvassing
14 committee to receive and tally returns and issue certificates.

15 * * *

16 (k)(1) In the case of the State offices of ~~governor, lieutenant governor,~~
17 ~~treasurer, secretary of state, attorney general, and auditor of accounts,~~ the
18 canvassing committee shall prepare a certificate of election but shall not
19 sign it.

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1 (2) The prepared certificate shall be presented to the official canvassing
2 committee appointed by the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly, pursuant to
3 Chapter II, § 47 of the Constitution of the State of Vermont ~~constitution~~, for
4 their use if they desire.

5 (1)(1) In the case of a tie vote, the canvassing committee shall forthwith
6 petition the appropriate ~~superior court~~ Superior Court for a recount pursuant to
7 section 2602 of this title.

8 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection,
9 either of the candidates that is involved in a tie may notify the appropriate
10 Superior Court that he or she is withdrawing, in which case the court shall
11 certify the other candidate as the winner.

12 (m)(1) Each canvassing committee shall file a report of its findings with the
13 ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State, who shall preserve the reports as
14 permanent records.

15 (2) In the case of the State offices, the State office canvassing committee
16 shall present a copy of its report to the official canvassing committee appointed
17 by the General Assembly pursuant to Chapter II, § 47 of the Constitution of the
18 State of Vermont for its use if it desires.

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1 * * * Contested Legislative Elections * * *

2 Sec. 42. 17 V.S.A. § 2605 is amended to read:

3 § 2605. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

4 (a) A candidate for the office of ~~representative to the general assembly~~
5 Representative to the General Assembly in the general election, or any elected
6 town officer in the representative district, or any 25 voters in the representative
7 district may request the ~~house of representatives~~ House of Representatives to
8 exercise its constitutional authority to judge ~~of~~ the elections and qualifications
9 of its own members, by filing a written request with the ~~secretary of state~~
10 Secretary of State specifying the candidate or candidates whose election is
11 being challenged. The request must be filed ~~no~~ not later than the latest of the
12 following:

- 13 (1) 20 days after the date of the election; or
14 (2) 10 days after a final court judgment, if there is a recount under
15 section 2602 of this title; ~~or~~
16 ~~(3) 10 days after a final court judgment, if there is a contest under~~
17 ~~section 2603 of this title.~~

18 (b)(1) The ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State shall notify the ~~attorney~~
19 ~~general~~ Attorney General, who shall investigate the facts, take such depositions
20 as may be necessary, prepare an opinion on the law and facts, and send his or

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1 her report and opinion to the ~~secretary of state~~ Clerk of the House at least
2 10 days before the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly convenes.

3 (2) If the Attorney General needs additional time to conduct the
4 investigation or prepare the report and opinion required by this subsection, he
5 or she shall alert the Clerk of the House of that need and the date by which he
6 or she plans to submit the report and opinion.

7 Sec. 43. 17 V.S.A. § 2606 is amended to read:

8 § 2606. SENATE

9 (a) A candidate for the office of ~~state senator~~ State Senator in the general
10 election; or any 100 voters in the senatorial district may request the ~~senate~~
11 Senate to exercise its constitutional authority to judge ~~of~~ the elections and
12 qualifications of its own members by filing a written request with the ~~secretary~~
13 ~~of state~~ Secretary of State specifying the candidate or candidates whose
14 election is being challenged. The request must be filed ~~no~~ not later than the
15 latest of the following:

16 (1) 20 days after the date of the election; or

17 (2) 10 days after a final court judgment, if there is a recount under
18 section 2602 of this title; ~~or~~

19 ~~(3) 10 days after a final court judgment, if there is a contest under~~
20 ~~section 2603 of this title.~~

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1 (b)(1) The ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State shall notify the ~~attorney~~
2 ~~general~~ Attorney General, who shall investigate the facts, take such depositions
3 as may be necessary, prepare an opinion on the law and facts, and send his or
4 her report and opinion to the ~~secretary of the senate~~ Secretary of the Senate at
5 least 10 days before the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly convenes.

6 (2) If the Attorney General needs additional time to conduct the
7 investigation or prepare the report and opinion required by this subsection, he
8 or she shall alert the Secretary of the Senate of that need and the date by which
9 he or she plans to submit the report and opinion.

10 * * * Local Elections; Generally * * *

11 Sec. 44. 17 V.S.A. § 2640 is amended to read:

12 § 2640. ANNUAL MEETINGS

13 (a) A meeting of the legal voters of each town shall be held annually on the
14 first Tuesday of March for the election of officers and the transaction of other
15 business, and it may be adjourned to another date. When a municipality fails
16 to hold an annual meeting, a warning for a subsequent meeting shall be issued
17 immediately, and at that meeting all the officers required by law may be
18 elected and its business transacted.

19 (b) When a town so votes, it may thereafter start its annual meeting on any
20 of the three days immediately preceding the first Tuesday in March at such

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1 time as it elects and may transact at that time any business not involving voting
2 by Australian ballot or voting required by law to be by ballot and to be held on
3 the first Tuesday in March. A meeting so started shall be adjourned until the
4 first Tuesday in March.

5 (c)(1) Notwithstanding section 2508 of this title, public discussion of ballot
6 issues and all other issues appearing in the warning, other than election of
7 candidates, shall be permitted ~~on that day~~ at the annual meeting, regardless of
8 the location of the polling place.

9 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection,
10 a candidate for local office nominated from the floor at the annual meeting
11 may introduce his or her candidacy to the extent permitted by the voters at the
12 meeting.

13 Sec. 45. 17 V.S.A. § 2650 is amended to read:

14 § 2650. ~~ADDITIONAL SELECTMEN AND LISTERS~~ AND

15 SELECTBOARD MEMBERS

16 (a) Additional listers. A town may vote at a special or annual town
17 meeting to elect ~~not more than~~ two additional listers for terms of one year each.

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1 (b) Additional selectboard members.

2 (1)(A) A town may vote at a special or annual town meeting to elect ~~not~~
3 ~~more than~~ two additional ~~selectmen~~ selectboard members for terms of either
4 one or two years each.

5 (B) When the terms of the additional ~~selectmen~~ selectboard members
6 are to be for two years, the warning for the meeting shall so specify.

7 (2)(A) If two additional ~~selectmen~~ selectboard member positions are
8 created, they shall be for terms of the same length, but if the terms of the new
9 positions are to be for two years, when the additional ~~selectmen~~ selectboard
10 members are first elected, one shall be elected for one year and the other
11 ~~selectman~~ selectboard member for two years.

12 (B) Terms of these additional ~~selectmen~~ selectboard members shall
13 end on annual meeting days. If the additional ~~selectmen~~ selectboard members
14 are elected at a special meeting, the term of those elected for one year shall
15 expire on the next annual meeting day and those elected for two years shall
16 expire on the second annual meeting day following their election.

17 (c) Discontinuing additional listers or selectboard members.

18 (1) A vote establishing additional ~~selectmen or listers~~ or selectboard
19 members shall remain in effect until the town votes to discontinue the two

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1 additional positions at an annual or special meeting duly warned for that
2 purpose.

3 (2) The term of office of any lister or selectboard member in office on
4 the date a town votes to discontinue that office shall expire on the 31st day
5 after the vote, unless a petition for reconsideration or rescission of that vote is
6 filed with the clerk of the municipality in accordance with section 2661 of this
7 chapter, in which case that section shall control.

8 Sec. 46. 17 V.S.A. § 2652 is amended to read:

9 § 2652. ROAD AND WATER COMMISSIONERS

10 The ~~board of selectmen~~ selectboard may and, when requested by at least
11 five percent of the legal voters of a town at least ~~40~~ 47 days prior to the annual
12 town meeting, ~~they~~ it shall insert in the warning for the annual town meeting
13 an article on the question of whether ~~or not~~ the town shall elect a road
14 commissioner or commissioners, or water commissioners, as provided in
15 section 2651 of this ~~title~~ chapter.

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1 Sec. 47. 17 V.S.A. § 2661 is amended to read:

2 § 2661. RECONSIDERATION OR RESCISSION OF VOTE

3 * * *

4 (c) A question voted on shall not be presented for reconsideration or
5 rescission at more than one subsequent meeting within ~~the succeeding 12~~
6 ~~months~~ a one-year period, except with the approval of the legislative body.

7 (d) For a vote by Australian ballot;

8 (1) the form of the ballot shall be as follows: “Article 1: [cite the article
9 to be reconsidered as lastly voted].”

10 (2) absentee ballots for the reconsideration or rescission vote shall be
11 sent to any voter who requested an absentee ballot for the initial vote on the
12 article to be reconsidered or rescinded, whether or not a separate request for an
13 absentee ballot for the reconsideration or rescission vote is submitted by the
14 voter.

15 * * *

16 (g) This section shall not apply to nonbinding advisory articles, which shall
17 not be subject to reconsideration or rescission.

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COMBINES H.512 AND H.514

Key: 1) **Potentially removed from bills;** 2) **Potentially added to bills;** 3) **Flag**

1 “Shall (name of municipality) adopt its (name of individual budget
2 article) or (all budget articles) by Australian ballot?”

3 * * *

4 (g) Hearing.

5 (1) Whenever a municipality has voted to adopt the Australian ballot
6 system of voting on any public question or budget, except the budget revote as
7 provided in subsection (c) of this section, the legislative body shall hold a
8 public informational hearing on the question by posting warnings at least
9 10 days in advance of the hearing in at least two public places within the
10 municipality and in the town clerk’s office.

11 (2)(A) The hearing shall be held within the 10 days preceding the
12 meeting at which the Australian ballot system is to be used. The legislative
13 body shall be responsible for the administration of this hearing, including the
14 preparation of minutes.

15 (B) ~~The~~ In a town that has voted to start its annual meeting on any of
16 the three days immediately preceding the first Tuesday in March in accordance
17 with subsection 2640(b) of this title, the hearing under this subsection may be
18 held in conjunction with ~~the~~ that meeting held under subsection 2640(c) of this
19 title, in which case the moderator shall preside.

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COMBINES H.512 AND H.514

Key: 1) ~~Potentially removed from bills~~; 2) Potentially added to bills; 3) Flag

1 Sec. 50. 17 V.S.A. § 2681 is amended to read:

2 § 2681. NOMINATIONS; PETITIONS; CONSENTS

3 (a)(1)(A) Nominations of the municipal officers shall be by petition. The
4 petition shall be filed with the municipal clerk, together with the endorsement,
5 if any, of any party or parties in accordance with the provisions of this title, ~~no~~
6 not later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election,
7 which shall be the filing deadline.

8 (B) A candidate shall be registered to vote in the town he or she is
9 seeking office at or before the time of filing the petition.

10 (2) The candidate shall also file a written consent to the printing of the
11 candidate's name on the ballot on or before the filing deadline for petitions as
12 set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

13 (3) A petition shall contain the name of only one candidate, and the
14 candidate's name shall appear on the petition as it does on the voter checklist.
15 ~~A voter shall not sign more than one petition for the same office, unless more~~
16 ~~than one nomination is to be made, in which case the voter may sign as many~~
17 ~~petitions as there are nominations to be made for the same office.~~

18 * * *

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COMBINES H.512 AND H.514

Key: 1) **Potentially removed from bills**; 2) **Potentially added to bills**; 3) **Flag**

1 * * * Local Election Recounts * * *

2 **Sec. X. 17 V.S.A. § 2681a is amended to read:**

3 **§ 2681a. LOCAL ELECTION BALLOTS**

4 * * *

5 (e) Public questions shall be written in the form of a question, with boxes
6 indicating a choice of “yes” and “no” directly under or to the right side of the
7 public question. No public question shall pass unless a majority of the votes,
8 excluding blank and ~~spoiled votes~~ overvotes, is cast in favor of the proposition.

9 Sec. 51. 17 V.S.A. § 2683 is amended to read:

10 § 2683. REQUEST FOR A RECOUNT; CANDIDATES

11 (a) A candidate for local office may request a recount by filing a request in
12 writing with the municipal clerk within 10 days after the election.

13 (b) If the difference between the number of votes cast for a winning
14 candidate and the number of votes cast for a losing candidate is ~~less than~~ five
15 percent or less of the total votes cast for all the candidates for an office,
16 divided by the number of persons to be elected, that losing candidate shall have
17 the right to have the votes for that office recounted.

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COMBINES H.512 AND H.514

Key: 1) ~~Potentially removed from bills~~; 2) Potentially added to bills; 3) Flag

1 Sec. 52. 17 V.S.A. § 2685 is amended to read:

2 § 2685. CONDUCT OF RECOUNT

3 (a)(1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, at the time
4 and place specified by the clerk, the board of civil authority shall break the
5 seal, open the ballot container, and recount the votes pursuant to the procedure
6 set forth in section 2685a of this subchapter and otherwise in the same manner
7 as the votes were counted on the day of the election.

8 (2) When the ballot for the office is printed on index stock and
9 configured to be readable by vote tabulator, the ~~presiding officer~~ town clerk
10 and board of civil authority shall conduct the recount by vote tabulator,
11 pursuant to the procedure set forth in chapter 51, subchapter 9 of this title to
12 the greatest extent practicable, if:

13 (A) the candidate who petitions for a recount requests that it be
14 conducted by vote tabulator;

15 (B) the board of civil authority, at a meeting held not less than 60
16 days prior to a local election and warned pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 801, has
17 voted to require the municipality for which it is elected to use vote tabulators
18 in subsequent recounts; or

19 (C) the municipality has voted to use vote tabulators in subsequent
20 recounts pursuant to a meeting warned for the purpose.

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COMBINES H.512 AND H.514

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1 (b) The petitioner, the opposing candidates, and their designated
2 representatives may inspect the ballots and observe the recount under the
3 guidance of the board.

4 (c) The board shall certify the result to the town clerk, who shall declare the
5 result.

6 (d) After the recount, the board shall seal the ballots and other materials
7 back in the containers and the town clerk shall safely store them as provided in
8 section 2590 of this title.

9 Sec. 53. 17 V.S.A. § 2685a is amended to read:

10 § 2685a. PROCEDURE FOR RECOUNT

11 (a) Storage of ballots; assignment of duties.

12 (1) The town clerk shall store all ballots, still in their sealed containers,
13 in his or her vault until the day of the recount.

14 (2)(A) The ~~presiding officer~~ town clerk shall supervise the recount.

15 (B) If the town clerk is unavailable or is a candidate for the office
16 subject to the recount, the board of civil authority shall appoint a voter of the
17 municipality to perform the duties of the town clerk under this section.

18 (3)(A) The board of civil authority shall appoint a sufficient number of
19 impartial assistant election officers to perform appropriate tasks ~~that are not~~
20 ~~practicable for the board of civil authority to perform~~ to conduct the recount.

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1 (B) Each assistant election officer shall be appointed and sworn as set
2 forth in section 2454 of this title.

3 (4) ~~The presiding officer shall assign members of the board of civil~~
4 ~~authority to teams of at least four persons, consisting of one caller and one~~
5 ~~observer, representing different candidates, and one tally person and one~~
6 ~~double-check person, representing different candidates. Any additional team~~
7 ~~members shall be additional observers and double-check persons who shall be~~
8 ~~assigned to ensure that each candidate has one person assigned as either a~~
9 ~~caller or an observer and one person assigned as either a tally person or a~~
10 ~~double-check person. One team shall be designated as the presiding officer~~
11 ~~observer team, which shall perform only the functions established under this~~
12 ~~section for that team. [Repealed.]~~

13 (5) ~~The board of civil authority shall use fresh seals, manila tags, tally~~
14 ~~sheets, double-check sheets, summary sheets for each polling place, master~~
15 ~~lists for the entire election to be recounted, and other appropriate material~~
16 ~~provided by the Secretary of State. [Repealed.]~~

17 (b) Preparation for recount.

18 (1) Before the recount begins, the ~~presiding officer~~ town clerk shall
19 explain the recount procedures ~~which~~ that are to be followed and shall answer
20 questions relating to such procedures.

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COMBINES H.512 AND H.514

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1 (2) The ~~recount teams established~~ election officials shall recount the
2 contents of one container before another container is opened and shall recount
3 the contents of all the containers relating to one polling place before moving to
4 those of another polling place.

5 (3) ~~For each polling place, the number of containers shall be counted~~
6 ~~and recorded on the master list.~~

7 (4) ~~Before opening, each container shall be inspected, and if no tag is~~
8 ~~present, replacement manila tags shall be affixed, specifying the date of~~
9 ~~election and the name of town and polling place. Likewise, each seal shall be~~
10 ~~examined to see if it is intact, and the presiding officer shall attach to any bag~~
11 ~~with a defective seal a tag stating that the seal was defective and containing the~~
12 ~~information which was contained on the defective seal.~~

13 (5) ~~Uncounted containers shall be kept in one part of the room and~~
14 ~~moved to the other side as they are counted. Each team shall have a separate~~
15 ~~table and the presiding officer shall have a separate table, all of which tables~~
16 ~~shall be spaced apart.~~

17 (6) ~~If there is more than one container from a polling place, the~~
18 ~~presiding officer shall open first the container which is identified as containing~~
19 ~~the checklist. Upon opening the first container in the presence of the presiding~~
20 ~~officer observer team, the presiding officer shall empty the contents onto the~~

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1 ~~presiding officer's table. The presiding officer shall ensure that teams are not~~
2 ~~given unused ballots, early or absentee ballots which arrived after the close of~~
3 ~~polls, or ballots spoiled by voters and turned in by voters requesting fresh~~
4 ~~ballots.~~

5 (c) ~~Examination of checklists.~~

6 ~~(1) The checklist from the first bag shall be assigned to a team. The~~
7 ~~caller and observer, each acting independently, shall examine the checklist and~~
8 ~~determine how many voters voted at the polling place, repeating the process~~
9 ~~until they agree on a number or until they agree to disagree on a number.~~

10 ~~(2) Then the checklist shall be examined by the tally person and the~~
11 ~~double-check person, repeating the process until they agree on a number or~~
12 ~~they agree to disagree on the number.~~

13 ~~(3) The results obtained from the two subgroups will be compared and if~~
14 ~~they do not match, the process shall be repeated until there is agreement among~~
15 ~~all the members of the team or until team members agree to disagree.~~

16 ~~(4) The number finally determined by a majority of team members shall~~
17 ~~be submitted to the presiding officer in the presence of the presiding officer~~
18 ~~observer team, together with an indication of the nature and extent of the~~
19 ~~disagreement. If one or more team members do not agree with the number~~
20 ~~submitted, the presiding officer shall note on the master list the fact that the~~

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1 ~~number of people appearing as having voted on a specified checklist was~~
2 ~~subject to dispute. [Repealed.]~~

3 (d) ~~Sorting of ballots.~~

4 (1) ~~Ballots from the first container shall be counted by one team and~~
5 ~~placed into piles containing 50 ballots each, except where there is a final pile~~
6 ~~which contains fewer than 50, in which case, the counting team shall affix to~~
7 ~~the top of the pile a note indicating how many ballots are contained in the pile.~~
8 ~~All of these ballots then shall be transferred to another team which shall verify~~
9 ~~that they are in piles of 50 ballots each and that any remaining pile contains the~~
10 ~~designated number of ballots.~~

11 (2) ~~The teams, except the presiding officer observer team and possibly~~
12 ~~the team which is processing the checklists, shall proceed to their tables and~~
13 ~~each team shall get from the presiding officer one pile of ballots, one tally~~
14 ~~sheet, and one double-check sheet per 50 ballots, unless there are more persons~~
15 ~~per team who serve as double-check persons, in which case, each such person~~
16 ~~shall be assigned a double-check sheet. If a team spoils a tally sheet or needs to~~
17 ~~retally, it must turn in the tally sheet in order to get another one. [Repealed.]~~

18 (e) ~~First tally~~ Ballot review.

19 (1) ~~The caller shall call the name of the person voted for and any blank~~
20 ~~or spoiled ballots. The tally person and the double-check person or persons~~

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1 ~~each shall make a suitable mark for that candidate and any blank or spoiled~~
2 ~~ballots.~~

3 ~~(2) If the caller and the observer or observers~~ election officials
4 examining a particular ballot do not agree on how a the vote on that ballot
5 should be counted, ~~the entire team~~ all of the ~~election officials~~ board of civil
6 authority members present shall ~~all~~ review the ~~ballot~~ vote, and if ~~all members~~
7 agree, ~~it~~ the vote shall be counted ~~that way~~ as agreed upon by a majority of
8 those ~~election officials~~ board of civil authority members.

9 ~~(3) If one member of the entire team does not agree, that ballot shall be~~
10 ~~set aside as a questioned ballot and a copy shall be made, which copy shall be~~
11 ~~clearly marked on its face identifying it as a copy. Such copies shall be placed~~
12 ~~on the top of the other ballots and shall remain together with the other ballots.~~
13 ~~Each original ballot deemed questionable shall be attached to a note which~~
14 ~~identifies it by town, polling place, and bag seal number. The originals of these~~
15 ~~questionable ballots shall be clipped to the summary sheet for that polling~~
16 ~~place and returned to the board of civil authority for a final decision by~~
17 ~~majority vote.~~

18 ~~(4) After the board of civil authority has rendered a final decision on a~~
19 ~~given questionable ballot, it shall be returned to the town clerk who shall keep~~
20 ~~it in a sealed container for a period of two years.~~

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Key: 1) **Potentially removed from bills;** 2) **Potentially added to bills;** 3) **Flag**

1 ~~(5)~~(2) Write-in votes for preprinted candidates shall be counted as votes
2 for that candidate.

3 ~~(6)~~ If the tally persons do not agree on the number of votes for a
4 candidate, the ballots shall be retallied until they do agree. Then the team shall
5 notify the presiding officer that it has completed the first recount.

6 (f) ~~Second tally.~~

7 ~~(1)~~ The presiding officer shall attach to the tally and double check
8 sheets a note which indicates which team members performed which functions
9 in the first recount, and shall provide the team with a new tally sheet and an
10 appropriate number of double check sheets to match the number of people
11 serving as double check persons.

12 ~~(2)~~ The members of the team then shall switch roles, with callers and
13 observers becoming tally persons and double check persons, as designated by
14 the presiding officer, and the team shall complete a second recount, following
15 the procedures established for the first recount.

16 ~~(3)~~ When the results of the second recount match those of the first, a
17 note shall be attached to the tally and double check sheets, indicating which
18 persons provided what functions during the second recount.

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1 ~~(4) Then the team shall take its tally sheets, double-check sheets, and~~
2 ~~ballots, plus a separate pile of questionable ballots, if any, to the presiding~~
3 ~~officer.~~

4 ~~(5) Team members, in the presence of the presiding officer observer~~
5 ~~team, shall read the totals to the presiding officer who, in the view of these~~
6 ~~observers, shall record the totals on the summary sheet for that polling place.~~

7 ~~(6) After a team has presented its pile of ballots to the presiding officer,~~
8 ~~it shall be assigned another pile of ballots, until all of the piles from a~~
9 ~~particular polling place have been recounted two times. [Repealed.]~~

10 ~~(g) Completing the tally.~~

11 ~~(1) After the totals for a polling place have been listed, the presiding~~
12 ~~officer shall add them up in the presence of the presiding officer observer~~
13 ~~team, and shall compare the number with the number of voters who voted at~~
14 ~~that polling place, according to the number obtained from the team that~~
15 ~~examined the certified checklist. If these numbers differ, the presiding officer~~
16 ~~shall note the amount of the difference on the summary sheets for that polling~~
17 ~~place.~~

18 ~~(2) The presiding officer shall return all ballots to the container, seal it,~~
19 ~~record the seal number on the summary sheet, write “recounted” and specify~~

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1 ~~the date of the recount on the tag, and move it to the other side of the room,~~
2 ~~making sure that there is never more than one bag open at any one time.~~

3 ~~(3) This procedure shall be repeated for each container, until the results~~
4 ~~from a polling place have been recounted, and then it shall be repeated until the~~
5 ~~results from all polling places in a town have been recounted.~~

6 ~~(4) The presiding officer shall add the totals on each summary sheet,~~
7 ~~affix the presiding officer's seal, and send the summary sheets for all polling~~
8 ~~places together with the master list and any questionable ballots to the board of~~
9 ~~civil authority. [Repealed.]~~

10 (h) Other rules for conducting the recount.

11 (1) The ~~presiding officer~~ town clerk shall preserve order. If a person,
12 after notice, is persistently disorderly and refuses to withdraw from the
13 premises, the ~~presiding officer~~ town clerk may cause the person to be removed
14 from the premises.

15 (2) The ~~presiding officer~~ town clerk shall designate an area within which
16 the recount shall take place. Persons who are not board of civil authority
17 members or appointed impartial election officers shall be permitted to view a
18 recount in progress, but persons not authorized by the ~~presiding officer~~ town
19 clerk shall not be permitted within the area designated by the ~~presiding officer~~
20 town clerk.

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1 ~~(3) Candidates and their attorneys shall be given the opportunity to~~
2 ~~present evidence to the board of civil authority relating to the conduct of the~~
3 ~~recount. If the board determines that any violations of recount procedures have~~
4 ~~occurred and that they may have affected the outcome of the recount, a new~~
5 ~~recount shall be ordered. After such hearings or arguments as may be indicated~~
6 ~~under the circumstances, the board, within five working days, shall issue a~~
7 ~~judgment, which shall supersede any certificate of election previously issued~~
8 ~~and shall return to the town clerk questionable ballots which had been~~
9 ~~forwarded to the board.~~

10 (i) After the recount.

11 (1)(A) If Except as provided in subdivision (B) of this subdivision (1), if
12 ~~the recount results in a tie, the board of civil authority shall order a recessed~~
13 ~~election to be held, within three weeks of the recount, on a date set by the~~
14 ~~board. The only candidates who shall appear on the ballot at the recessed~~
15 ~~election shall be those who tied in the previous election. The recessed election~~
16 ~~shall be considered a separate election for the purpose of voter registration~~
17 ~~under chapter 43 of this title a runoff election shall be conducted in accordance~~
18 ~~with section 2682b of this chapter.~~

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1 (B) If the recount confirms a tie, as to any public question, ~~no~~
2 ~~recessed~~ a new election shall not be held, and the question shall be certified not
3 to have passed.

4 ~~(C) Warnings for a recessed election shall be posted as required by~~
5 ~~this chapter, except that the warnings shall be posted not less than 10 days~~
6 ~~before the recessed election. The conduct of a recessed election shall be as~~
7 ~~provided in this chapter for local elections.~~

8 ~~(2) The town clerk shall send a certified copy of the judgment to the~~
9 ~~Secretary of State.~~

10 * * * Local Office Vacancies * * *

11 Sec. 54. 24 V.S.A. § 963 is amended to read:

12 § 963. DUTIES OF ~~SELECTPERSONS~~ SELECTBOARD; SPECIAL
13 MEETING

14 (a) When a vacancy occurs in any town office, the ~~selectpersons~~
15 selectboard forthwith by appointment in writing shall fill such vacancy until an
16 election is had; except that in the event of vacancies in a majority of the
17 selectboard at the same time, such vacancies shall be filled by a special town
18 meeting called for that purpose.

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1 necessary for him or her to comply with the provisions of this section and
2 section 1174 of this title.

3 * * * Presidential Elections * * *

4 Sec. 55. 17 V.S.A. § 2702 is amended to read:

5 § 2702. NOMINATING PETITION

6 (a) The name of any person shall be printed upon the primary ballot as a
7 candidate for nomination by any major political party if petitions signed by at
8 least 1,000 voters in accordance with sections 2353, 2354, and 2358 of this
9 title are filed with the Secretary of State, together with the written consent of
10 the person to the printing of the person's name on the ballot.

11 (b) Petitions shall be filed not later than 5:00 p.m. on the ~~first Monday after~~
12 ~~the first Tuesday~~ 15th day of January December preceding the primary
13 election.

14 (c) The petition shall be in a form prescribed by the Secretary of State.

15 (d) A person's name shall not be listed as a candidate on the primary ballot
16 of more than one party in the same election.

17 (e) Each petition shall be accompanied by a filing fee of \$2,000.00 to be
18 paid to the Secretary of State. However, if the petition of a candidate is
19 accompanied by the affidavit of the candidate, which shall be available for
20 public inspection, that the candidate and the candidate's campaign committee

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1 are without sufficient funds to pay the filing fee, the Secretary of State shall
2 waive all but \$300.00 of the payment of the filing fee by that candidate.

3 Sec. 56. 17 V.S.A. § 2716 is amended to read:

4 § 2716. NOTIFICATION TO SECRETARY OF STATE

5 Not later than 5:00 p.m. on the ~~55th~~ 65th day before the day of the general
6 election, the chair of the State committee of each major political party shall
7 certify in writing to the Secretary of State the names of the presidential and
8 vice presidential nominees selected at the party's national convention.

9 * * * Campaign Finance * * *

10 Sec. 57. 17 V.S.A. § 2904 is amended to read:

11 § 2904. CIVIL INVESTIGATION

12 (a)(1) The Attorney General or a State's Attorney, whenever he or she has
13 reason to believe any person to be or to have been in violation of this chapter
14 or of any rule or regulation made pursuant to this chapter, may examine or
15 cause to be examined by any agent or representative designated by him or her
16 for that purpose any books, records, papers, memoranda, or physical objects of
17 any nature bearing upon each alleged violation and may demand written
18 responses under oath to questions bearing upon each alleged violation.

19 * * *

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1 (5) Nothing in this subsection is intended to prevent the Attorney
2 General or a State’s Attorney from disclosing the results of an investigation
3 conducted under this section, including the grounds for his or her decision as to
4 whether to bring an enforcement action alleging a violation of this chapter or
5 of any rule ~~or regulation~~ made pursuant to this chapter.

6 * * *

7 Sec. 58. 17 V.S.A. § 2973 is amended to read:

8 § 2973. SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR RADIO,

9 TELEVISION, OR INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS

10 (a) In addition to the identification requirements set forth in section 2972 of
11 this subchapter, a person, candidate, political committee, or political party that
12 makes an expenditure for an electioneering communication shall include in any
13 communication ~~which~~ that is transmitted through radio, television, or online
14 video, in a clearly spoken manner, an audio statement of the name and title of
15 the person who paid for the communication and that the person paid for the
16 communication.

17 (b) If the person who paid for the communication is not a natural person,
18 the audio statement required by this section shall include the name of that
19 non-natural person and the name and title of the treasurer, in the case of a

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1 political committee or political party, or the principal officer in the case of the
2 any other non-natural person.

3 * * * Effective Date * * *

4 Sec. 59. EFFECTIVE DATE

5 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12 (Committee vote: _____)

13

14

Senator _____

15

FOR THE COMMITTEE