

1 H.474

2 Introduced by Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs

3 Date:

4 Subject: Elections; ranked-choice voting; nominations; electronic ballot return;
5 write-in candidates; campaign finance; recounts

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
7 Secretary of State to report on the feasibility of permanently instituting
8 ranked-choice voting for presidential primary elections. It proposes to prohibit
9 a major political party from nominating a candidate for a general election if
10 that party failed to nominate a candidate during the primary election. This bill
11 proposes to prohibit a candidate who loses a major party primary for any office
12 from appearing on the general election ballot for the same office for which the
13 candidate lost in the primary election as an independent candidate or
14 representing any other party. It proposes to require the Secretary of State to
15 report on the feasibility of permitting electronic ballot return for voters who
16 are ill, injured, or have a disability; military and overseas voters; and voters
17 who participate in the Secretary of State's Address Confidentiality Program.
18 This bill proposes to permit candidates to provide additional demographic
19 information. It proposes to require write-in candidates to file consent of
20 candidacy forms in advance of an election and to increase the minimum
21 thresholds for write-in candidates in primary elections. This bill proposes to

1 make various modifications to campaign finance reporting and requirements.
2 It proposes to require town clerks and boards of civil authority to perform
3 audits to voter checklists for Representative districts and Senatorial districts
4 that split municipal boundaries. This bill proposes to, in the event of a
5 contested election and recount, require candidates to nominate disinterested
6 parties to a recount committee and prohibit the Superior Court from appointing
7 nominees to the recount committee if they are an interested party. It also
8 proposes to modify deadlines for various State and local election procedures.

9 An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election law

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

11 ~~*** Ranked Choice Voting Report ***~~

12 Sec. 1. REPORT

13 On or before January 15, 2026, the Secretary of State shall submit a written
14 report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military
15 Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations regarding the
16 feasibility and associated costs of permanently instituting ranked-choice voting
17 for presidential primary elections in the State.

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

2 § 2381. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

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

6 (1) ~~In~~ in case of a vacancy on the general election ballot occasioned by
7 death, removal, or withdrawal of a candidate, ~~or~~ but not for the failure of a
8 major political party to nominate a candidate by primary;

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

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

15 ~~Sec. 2. [Deleted.]~~

16 ~~Sec. 3. 17 V.S.A. § 2386 is amended to read:~~

17 § 2386. TIME FOR FILING STATEMENTS

18 (a) ~~In the case of the failure of a major political party to nominate a~~
19 ~~candidate by primary, a statement shall be filed not later than 5:00 p.m. on the~~
20 ~~sixth day following the primary. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 3. [Deleted.]

* * * One-Bite Candidacy * * *

Sec. 4. 17 V.S.A. § 2381 is amended to read:

§ 2381. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

* * *

(c) In no event shall a candidate who loses a major party primary be nominated to appear on the general election ballot pursuant to this subchapter by a committee of any party other than the party for which the candidate appeared on the primary ballot.

Sec. 5. 17 V.S.A. § 2401 is amended to read:

§ 2401. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

(a) A person may be nominated and have his or her the person's name printed on the general election ballot for any office by filing a consent similar in form to the consent prescribed by section 2361 of this title and a statement of nomination with the Secretary of State. In the case of a nomination for justice of the peace, the consent form and statement of nomination shall be filed with the town clerk.

(b) A candidate who loses a major party primary for any office shall not appear on the general election ballot as an independent candidate for the same office for which the candidate lost in the primary election.

~~*** Electronic Ballot Returns Report and Miscellaneous Changes to~~

Electronic Ballot Delivery Law ***

Sec. 6. REPORT

On or before November 15, 2026, the Secretary of State shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations regarding the feasibility and associated costs of permitting electronic ballot return for voters who are ill, injured, or have a disability; military and overseas voters; and voters who participate in the Secretary of State's Address Confidentiality Program.

Sec. 7. 17 V.S.A. § 2539 is amended to read:

§ 2539. DELIVERY OF EARLY VOTER ABSENTEE BALLOTS

(c) Military or overseas voters.

(1) Early voter absentee ballots for military or overseas voters shall be sent air mail, first class, postpaid when such service is available, or they may be electronically delivered when requested by the voter.

(2)(A) The town clerk's office shall be open on the 46th day before any election that includes a federal office and the town clerk shall send on or before that day all absentee ballots to any military or overseas voter who requested an early voter absentee ballot on or before that day.

1 ~~(P) On that day the town clerk shall complete any reporting~~
2 requirements and any other responsibilities regarding the mailing of early
3 voter absentee ballots to military or overseas voters, as directed by the
4 Secretary of State.

5 (3) As used in this section, "overseas voters" means a person who was
6 last domiciled in Vermont before leaving the United States and now resides
7 outside the United States.

8 (d) Voters who participate in the Secretary of State's Address
9 Confidentiality Program. In the case of persons who participate in the address
10 confidentiality program administered by the Secretary of State set forth in 15
11 V.S.A. § 1152, if the voter or authorized person requests in the application or
12 otherwise that early voter absentee ballots be mailed or electronically
13 delivered, the town clerk shall mail or electronically deliver the ballots.

14 * * * Candidate Demographic Information * * *

15 Sec. 8. 17 V.S.A. § 2665 is amended to read:

16 § 2665. NOTIFICATION TO SECRETARY OF STATE

17 (a) The town clerk shall file with the Secretary of State a list of ~~the names~~
18 ~~and addresses of the selectboard members elected and~~ candidates that includes
19 the candidates' street addresses, email addresses, sought office, and the end
20 date of the term of office of each selectboard member, city councilor, village

1 ~~trustee, and mayor elected. The town clerk shall notify the Secretary of State~~
2 of any changes in the list as filed.

3 (b) A candidate may voluntarily provide information about the candidate's
4 gender, age, or race or ethnicity in the format provided by the Secretary of
5 State. A candidate who does not provide information pertaining to gender,
6 age, or race or ethnicity may still appear on the ballot if all other requirements
7 are met.

8 (c) Information about a candidate's gender, age, or race or ethnicity
9 collected pursuant to this subsection is exempt from public inspection and
10 copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept confidential, except
11 that the Secretary of State may publish information pertaining to candidates'
12 gender, age, or race or ethnicity in aggregate form.

13 * * * Write-in Candidate Registration and Minimum Thresholds in Primary
14 Elections * * *

15 ~~Sec. 9-17 V.S.A. § 2370 is amended to read:~~

16 § 2370. WRITE-IN CANDIDATES

17 (a) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under subdivision
18 2587(e)(3) of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the second Friday preceding
19 the primary election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any
20 county office, any State office, or any federal office shall file with the
21 Secretary of State a form consenting to candidacy for office as set forth in

1 ~~subsection 2587(e) of this title. The Secretary of State shall notify the town~~
2 ~~clerk's of any filings made in accordance with this subsection not later than the~~
3 ~~Friday before the election.~~

4 (b) A write-in candidate shall not qualify as a primary winner unless ~~he or~~
5 ~~she the candidate~~ receives at least one-half the same number of votes as the
6 number of signatures required for ~~his or her the candidate's~~ office on a
7 primary petition, except that if a write-in candidate receives more votes than a
8 candidate whose name is printed on the ballot, ~~he or she may the write-in~~
9 candidate shall qualify as a primary winner.

10 (b)(c) The write-in candidate who qualifies as a primary winner under this
11 section must still be determined a winner under section 2369 of this chapter
12 before ~~he or she the candidate~~ becomes the party's candidate in the general
13 ~~election.~~

Sec. 9. 17 V.S.A. § 2370 is amended to read:

§ 2370. WRITE-IN CANDIDATES

(a) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under subdivision
2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary election, a
write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal
office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design affirming that
the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3)
of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within

~~the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary of State's Office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.~~

~~(b) A write-in candidate shall not qualify as a primary winner unless ~~he or she~~ the candidate receives at least one-half the same number of votes as the number of signatures required for his or her the candidate's office on a primary petition, except that if a write-in candidate receives more votes than a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot, ~~he or she may~~ the write-in candidate shall qualify as a primary winner. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, a candidate who has not filed in accordance with subsection (a) shall qualify as a primary winner if the candidate otherwise complies with the provisions of this subsection.~~

~~(b)(c) The write-in candidate who qualifies as a primary winner under this section must still be determined a winner under section 2369 of this chapter before ~~he or she~~ the candidate becomes the party's candidate in the general election.~~

1 ~~Sec. 10-17 V.S.A. § 2472 is amended to read:~~

2 § 2472. CONTENTS

3

1 ~~(b)(1) Each office to be voted upon shall be separately indicated and~~
2 preceded by the word "For," as: "For United States Senator." Beneath the
3 office to be voted upon shall appear the instructions: "Vote for not more than
4 (the number of candidates to be elected)."

5 * * *

6 ~~(6) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under~~
7 ~~subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the second~~
8 ~~Friday preceding the general election, a write-in candidate for the General~~
9 ~~Assembly, any county office, any State office, or any federal office shall file~~
10 ~~with the Secretary of State a form consenting to candidacy for office as set~~
11 ~~forth in subsection 2587(e) of this title. The Secretary of State shall notify the~~
12 ~~town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection not later~~
13 ~~than the Friday before the election.~~

14 ~~Sec. 10. 17 V.S.A. § 2472 is amended to read:~~

~~§ 2472. CONTENTS~~

~~* * *~~

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

* * *

(5)(A) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under subdivision 2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary of State's Office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (A) of this subdivision (5), a candidate who has not filed in accordance with subdivision (A) shall qualify as the winner of an election if the candidate otherwise complies with the provisions of this chapter.

* * *

1 Sec. 11-17 V.S.A. § 2587 is amended to read:

2 § 2587. RULES FOR COUNTING VOTES

3 * *

4 (e)(1) In the case of "write-in" votes, the act of writing in the name of a
5 candidate, or pasting a label containing a candidate's name upon the ballot,

1 ~~without other indications of the voter's intent, shall constitute a vote for that~~
2 candidate, even though the voter did not fill in the square or oval after the
3 name.

4 (2)(A) A vote for a write-in candidate shall be counted as a write-in vote
5 that is without consent of candidate unless the write-in candidate filed a
6 consent of candidate form with the Secretary of State in accordance with
7 section 2370 of this title in the primary election, subsection 2472(b) of this
8 title for the general election, and subsection 2703(f) of this title for the
9 presidential primary. The consent form shall set forth the name of the
10 candidate, the name of the office for which the candidate consents to be a
11 candidate, the candidate's town of residence, and the candidate's correct
12 mailing address. The clerk shall record the name and vote totals of a write-in
13 candidate who has filed in accordance with section 2370 of this title in the
14 primary election, subsection 2472(b) of this title for the general election, and
15 subsection 2703(f) of this title for the presidential primary.

16 (B) The Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish forms for
17 candidate consent purposes.

18 (3) The election officials counting ballots and tallying results shall only
19 list every person who receives a "write-in" vote and the number of votes
20 received the names and votes received of those write-in candidates who
21 consented to candidacy for the office pursuant to section 2370 of this title in

1 ~~the primary election, subsection 2472(b) of this title for the general election~~
2 and subsection 2703(f) of this title for the presidential primary. Any write-in
3 votes for candidates who have not consented to the write-in candidacy shall be
4 listed as “other write-ins.”

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

8 (B) Names of ~~fictitious or deceased~~ persons who are not registered
9 write-in candidates shall not be listed individually and shall be recorded on the
10 tally sheet as a blank vote in the aggregate as “other write-ins.”

11 (f) When the same number of persons are nominated for the position of
12 justice of the peace as there are positions to be filled, the presiding officer may
13 declare the whole slate of candidates elected without making individual tallies,
14 providing each person on the slate has more votes than the largest number of
15 ~~write-in votes for any one registered write-in candidate.~~

Sec. 11. 17 V.S.A. § 2587 is amended to read:

§ 2587. RULES FOR COUNTING VOTES

* * *

*(e)(1) In the case of “write-in” votes, the act of writing in the name of a
candidate, or pasting a label containing a candidate’s name upon the ballot,
~~without other indications of the voter’s intent, shall constitute a vote for that~~*

~~candidate, even though the voter did not fill in the square or oval after the name.~~

~~(2) A vote for a write-in candidate shall be counted as a write-in vote that is without requisite filings unless the write-in candidate filed in accordance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title. The clerk shall record the name and vote totals of a write-in candidate who has complied with this section.~~

~~(3)(A) The election officials counting ballots and tallying results shall list every person who receives a “write-in” vote and the number of votes received only the names and votes received of those write-in candidates who filed in accordance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title. Any write-in votes for candidates who have not filed in accordance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title shall be listed as “other write-ins.”~~

~~(4)(B) On each tally sheet, the counters shall add together the names of candidates that are clearly the same person, even though a nickname or last name is used.~~

~~(B)(C) Names of fictitious or deceased persons who have not filed in accordance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title shall not be listed individually and shall be recorded on the tally sheet as a blank vote in aggregate as “other write-ins.”~~

(f) When the same number of persons are nominated for the position of justice of the peace as there are positions to be filled, the presiding officer may declare the whole slate of candidates elected without making individual tallies, providing each person on the slate has more votes than the largest number of write-in votes for any one registered write-in candidate.

Sec. 12-17 V.S.A. § 2702 is amended to read:

§ 2702. NOMINATING PETITION

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

(b) Petitions shall be filed not later than 5:00 p.m. on the 15th day of December preceding the primary election.

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

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

(e) Each petition shall be accompanied by a filing fee of \$2,000.00 to be paid to the Secretary of State. However, if the petition of a candidate is accompanied by the affidavit of the candidate, which shall be available for

public inspection, that the candidate and the candidate's campaign committee

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

3 ~~(f) In order to have votes counted for a write-in candidate under section~~
4 ~~2587 of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the second Friday preceding the~~
5 ~~presidential primary election, a write-in candidate for nomination by any major~~
6 ~~political party shall file with the Secretary of State a form consenting to~~
7 ~~candidacy for office as set forth in subsection 2361(b) of this title. The~~
8 ~~Secretary of State shall notify the town clerks of any filings made in~~
9 ~~accordance with this subsection not later than the Friday before the election.~~

Sec. 12. 17 V.S.A. § 2702 is amended to read:

§ 2702. NOMINATING PETITION

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

(b) Petitions shall be filed not later than 5:00 p.m. on the 15th day of December preceding the primary election.

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

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

~~(e) Each petition shall be accompanied by a filing fee of \$2,000.00 to be paid to the Secretary of State. However, if the petition of a candidate is accompanied by the affidavit of the candidate, which shall be available for public inspection, that the candidate and the candidate's campaign committee are without sufficient funds to pay the filing fee, the Secretary of State shall waive all but \$300.00 of the payment of the filing fee by that candidate.~~

~~(f)(1) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under subdivision 2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary of State's Office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.~~

~~(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, a candidate who has not filed in accordance with subdivision (1) shall qualify as the winner of an election if the candidate otherwise complies with the provisions of this chapter.~~

1 ~~Sec. 13. 17 V.S.A. § 2921 is amended to read:~~

2 ~~§ 2921. CANDIDATES; REGISTRATION; CHECKING ACCOUNT;~~

3 ~~TREASURER~~

4 ~~(a) Each candidate who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of~~
5 ~~\$500.00 or more in an election cycle files a consent to the printing of the~~
6 ~~candidate's name on the ballot, as provided in section 2361 of this title, shall~~
7 ~~register with the Secretary of State within 10 days of reaching the \$500.00~~
8 ~~threshold or on the date that the next report is required of the candidate under~~
9 ~~this chapter, whichever occurs first, prior to filing the consent stating his or her~~
10 ~~the candidate's full name and address; the office the candidate is seeking;~~ the
11 ~~name and address of the bank in which the candidate maintains his or her the~~
12 ~~campaign checking account; if raising or spending any campaign funds, and~~
13 ~~the name and address of the treasurer responsible for maintaining the checking~~
14 ~~account. A candidate's treasurer may be the candidate or his or her the~~
15 ~~candidate's spouse.~~

16 ~~Sec. 13. 17 V.S.A. § 2921 is amended to read:~~

~~§ 2921. CANDIDATES; REGISTRATION; CHECKING ACCOUNT;~~

~~TREASURER~~

~~(a)(1) Each candidate who has made expenditures or accepted~~
~~contributions of \$500.00 or more in an election cycle files a consent to the~~

~~printing of the candidate's name on the ballot as provided in section 2361 of this title, shall register with the Secretary of State within 10 days of reaching the \$500.00 threshold or on the date that the next report is required of the candidate under this chapter, whichever occurs first, prior to filing the consent stating his or her the candidate's full name and address; and the office the candidate is seeking.~~

~~(2) Each candidate who accepts or expends any campaign funds shall file with the Secretary of State at the time of expending the funds the name and address of the bank in which the candidate maintains his or her the campaign checking account; and the name and address of the treasurer responsible for maintaining the checking account. A candidate's treasurer may be the candidate or his or her the candidate's spouse.~~

* * *

1 ~~Sec. 14. 17 V.S.A. § 2964 is amended to read:~~

2 § 2964. CAMPAIGN REPORTS; CANDIDATES FOR STATE OFFICE,
3 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND COUNTY OFFICE;
4 POLITICAL COMMITTEES; POLITICAL PARTIES

5 (a)(1) Each candidate for State office, the General Assembly, or a two-
6 year-term county office who has rolled over any amount of surplus into his or
7 her new campaign or who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of
8 \$500.00 or more during the two-year general election cycle and, except as

1 ~~provided in subsection (b) of this section, each political committee that has not~~
2 ~~filed a final report pursuant to subsection 2965(b) of this chapter, and each~~
3 ~~political party required to register under section 2923 of this chapter shall file~~
4 ~~with the Secretary of State campaign finance reports as follows:~~

5 * * *

6 (2) ~~Each candidate for a four-year term county office who has rolled~~
7 ~~over any amount of surplus into his or her new campaign or who has made~~
8 ~~expenditures or accepted contributions of \$500.00 or more during the four-~~
9 ~~year general election cycle shall file with the Secretary of State campaign~~
10 ~~finance reports as follows:~~

11 ~~Sec. 14. 17 V.S.A. § 2964 is amended to read:~~

~~§ 2964. CAMPAIGN REPORTS; CANDIDATES FOR STATE OFFICE,~~
~~THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND COUNTY OFFICE;~~
~~POLITICAL COMMITTEES; POLITICAL PARTIES~~

~~(a)(1) Each candidate for State office, the General Assembly, or a two-~~
~~year-term county office who has rolled over any amount of surplus into his or~~
~~her new campaign or who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of~~
~~\$500.00 or more during the two-year general election cycle and, except as~~
~~provided in subsection (b) of this section, each political committee that has not~~
~~filed a final report pursuant to subsection 2965(b) of this chapter, and each~~

~~political party required to register under section 2023 of this chapter shall file
with the Secretary of State campaign finance reports as follows:~~

~~* * *~~

~~(2) Each candidate for a four-year-term county office who has rolled
over any amount of surplus into his or her new campaign or who has made
expenditures or accepted contributions of \$500.00 or more during the four-
year general election cycle shall file with the Secretary of State campaign
finance reports as follows:~~

~~* * *~~

1 Sec. 15. 17 V.S.A. § 2901 is amended to read:

2 § 2901. DEFINITIONS

3 As used in this chapter:

4 * * *

5 (10) ~~“Independent expenditure-only political committee” means a~~
6 ~~political committee that conducts its activities entirely independent of~~
7 ~~candidates; does not give contributions to candidates, political committees, or~~
8 ~~political parties; does not make related expenditures; and is not closely related~~
9 ~~to a political party or to a political committee that makes contributions to~~
10 ~~candidates or makes related expenditures.~~

11 (11) “Mass media activity” means a television commercial, radio
12 ~~commercial, ~~internet~~ internet advertisement, mass mailing, mass electronic or~~

1 ~~digital communication, literature drop, newspaper or periodical advertisement,~~
2 robotic phone call, or telephone bank, that includes the name or likeness of a
3 clearly identified candidate for office.

4 (12)(11) "Party candidate listing" means any communication by a
5 political party that:

6 * * *

7 (13)(12) "Political committee" or "political action committee" means
8 any formal or informal committee of ~~two~~ one or more individuals or a
9 corporation, labor organization, public interest group, or other entity, not
10 including a political party, that accepts contributions of \$1,000.00 or more ~~and~~
11 or makes expenditures of \$1,000.00 or more in any two-year general election
12 cycle for the purpose of supporting or opposing one or more candidates,
13 influencing an election, or advocating a position on a public question in any
14 election, and includes ~~an independent expenditure-only political committee a~~
15 public question campaign and a legislative leadership political committee.

16 (14)(13) "Political party" means a political party organized under
17 chapter 45 of this title and any committee established, financed, maintained, or
18 controlled by the party, including any subsidiary, branch, or local unit thereof,
19 and shall be considered a single, unified political party. The national affiliate
20 ~~of the political party shall be considered a separate political party.~~

(15)(14) "Public question" means an issue that is before the voters for a binding decision.

(15) "Public question campaign" means a political campaign, specifically an effort to influence an election, that conducts its activities entirely independent of candidates; does not give contributions to candidates, political committee, or political parties; does not make any "related campaign expenditures" as defined in subsection 2944(b) of this title; and is not closely related to a political party or to a political committee that makes contributions to candidates or makes related expenditures. A "public question campaign" includes any campaign making independent expenditures as defined by 52 U.S.C. § 30101.

* * *

Sec. 16. 17 V.S.A. § 2971 is amended to read:

§ 2971. REPORT OF MASS MEDIA ACTIVITIES

* * *

(d)(1) In addition to the reporting requirements of this section, an independent expenditure-only political committee a public question campaign that makes an expenditure for any one mass media activity totaling \$5,000.00 or more, adjusted for inflation pursuant to the Consumer Price Index as provided in section 2905 of this chapter, within 45 days before a primary, general, county, or local election shall, for each such activity and within 24

1 ~~hours of the expenditure or activity, whichever occurs first, file an independent~~
2 ~~expenditure-only political committee a public question campaign mass media~~
3 ~~report with the Secretary of State and send a copy of the report to each~~
4 ~~candidate whose name or likeness is included in the activity without that~~
5 ~~candidate's knowledge.~~

6 * * *

7 Sec. 17. REPEAL

8 17 V.S.A. § 2970 (campaign reports; other entities; public questions) is
9 repealed.

10 * * * Audits of Voter Checklists and District Boundaries* * *

11 Sec. 18. AUDITS OF VOTER CHECKLISTS AND DISTRICT
12 BOUNDARIES

13 (a) On or before September 15, 2025, local boards of civil authority and
14 town clerks whose municipal boundaries are divided for the purpose of
15 Representative districts and Senatorial districts shall audit their voter checklists
16 to ensure that those checklists accurately correspond to the prescribed district
17 boundaries.

18 (b) On or before October 1, 2025, each town clerk described in subsection
19 (a) of this section shall provide a written summary of the audit to the Elections
20 Division of the Secretary of State's office.

1 ~~(c) On or before November 15, 2025, the Secretary shall submit a written~~
2 report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military
3 Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations with the
4 findings of the audits.

5 (d) Within two weeks after passage of this act, the Elections Division of the
6 Secretary of State's office shall notify each town clerk and board of civil
7 authority described in subsection (a) of this section that they must perform the
8 audits.

9 (e) The Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office shall provide
10 support and training to each town clerk and board of civil authority described
11 in subsection (a) of this section.

12 * * * Prohibiting Appointment of Interested Parties to a Recount

13 Committee * *

14 Sec. 19. 17 V.S.A. § 2602a is amended to read:

15 § 2602a. APPOINTMENT OF RECOUNT COMMITTEE

16 (a)(1) Upon receipt of a petition, the county clerk shall notify all
17 candidates for the office that is the subject of the recount, advising them to
18 each submit immediately a list of a minimum of 10 nominees for disinterested
19 individuals to serve on a recount committee.

20 (2)(A) If a list of nominees is not delivered to the county clerk within
21 two business days, the clerk shall notify the appropriate candidates that they

1 ~~have 24 hours to submit lists of nominees for disinterested individuals to serve~~
2 ~~on the recount committee.~~

3 * * *

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

8 (2) In making these appointments, the court shall appoint an equal
9 number of ~~persons~~ disinterested individuals representing each candidate, to the
10 extent practicable.

11 (c) As used in this section, "disinterested individual" means an individual
12 who is not a relative of or subordinate to the candidates and who shares no
13 direct pecuniary interest with the candidates.

14 * * * Deadline Modifications and Miscellaneous Clarifications * * *

15 Sec. 20. 17 V.S.A. § 1971 is amended to read:

16 § 1971. CASTING MORE THAN ONE BALLOT

17 A legal voter who knowingly ~~casts more than one ballot at any one time of~~
18 ~~balloting~~ votes more than once in any election held in this State, or who votes
19 in both this State and another state or territory in the same or equivalent
20 election for the same office shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 if the

1 ~~offense is committed at a primary or general election, and not more than~~

2 \$100.00 if committed at a local election.

3 Sec. 21. REPEAL

4 17 V.S.A. § 1973 (voting in more than one place) is repealed.

5 Sec. 22. 17 V.S.A. § 2103 is amended to read:

6 § 2103. DEFINITIONS

7 As used in this title, unless the context or a specific definition requires a
8 different reading:

9 * * *

10 (6) "Campaign" means any organized or coordinated activity undertaken
11 by ~~two~~ one or more persons, any part of which is designed to influence the
12 nomination, election, or defeat of any candidate or the passage, defeat, or
13 modification of any public question.

14 * * *

15 Sec. 23. 17 V.S.A. § 2358 is amended to read:

16 § 2358. EXAMINING PETITIONS; SUPPLEMENTARY PETITIONS

17 * * *

18 (b) If found not to conform, ~~he or she~~ the officer shall state in writing on a
19 particular petition why it cannot be accepted, and within ~~72 hours~~ two business
20 days from receipt, ~~he or she~~ the officer shall return it to the candidate in whose
21 ~~benefit it was filed. In such case, supplementary petitions may be filed not~~

1 ~~later than 10 days after the date for filing petitions. However, supplementary~~
2 petitions shall not be accepted if petitions with signatures of different persons
3 totaling at least the required number were not received by the filing deadline.

4 * * *

5 Sec. 24. 17 V.S.A. § 2313 is amended to read:

6 § 2313. FILING OF CERTIFICATE OF ORGANIZATION

7 * * *

8 (f) At the same time of filing the certificate of organization, the chair and
9 secretary shall file with the Secretary of State a single machine-readable
10 electronic document containing a list of the names and contact information, in
11 a format specified by the Secretary of State, of the town and county committee
12 members from those towns and counties who have organized pursuant to this
13 chapter.

14 (g) A committee is not considered organized until the material required by
15 this section has been filed and accepted.

16 Sec. 25. 17 V.S.A. § 2413 is amended to read:

17 § 2413. NOMINATION OF JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

18 (a)(1) The party members in each town, on or before the third Monday in
19 July before each primary election, upon the call of the town committee, may
20 meet in caucus and nominate candidates for justice of the peace.

21

1 ~~(e) For any nomination made under this section, the chair and secretary of~~
2 the committee or caucus shall file the statement required by section 2385 of
3 this title by 5:00 p.m. on the ~~third day following~~ fourth Monday in July before
4 the primary election.

5 Sec. 26. 17 V.S.A. § 2493 is amended to read:

6 § 2493. RULES FOR USE OF VOTE TABULATORS; AUDITS

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

10 * * *

11 (3)(A) The Secretary of State shall conduct a ~~random~~ postelection audit
12 of any polling place election results for a general election within 30 days of the
13 election.

14 (B) If the Secretary determines that a ~~random~~ an audit shall be
15 conducted of the election results in a town or city, the town clerk shall direct
16 two members of the board of civil authority to transport the ballot bags to the
17 office of the Secretary not later than 10:00 a.m. on the morning when the
18 Secretary has scheduled the audit.

1 ~~Sec. 27. 17 V.S.A. § 2546 is amended to read:~~

2 § 2546. RECEIPT OF BALLOTS BY CLERK; VOTER STATUS;
3 OPPORTUNITY TO CURE; PROCESSING ABSENTEE
4 BALLOTS

5 (a) Town clerk; process generally. Beginning ~~30~~ 45 days before the
6 opening of the polls on election day, upon receipt of a mailing envelope
7 containing ballots returned by a voter, the town clerk shall, within three
8 business days or on the next day the office is open for business, whichever is
9 later, direct two election officials working together to do all of the following:

10 * * *

11 Sec. 28. 17 V.S.A. § 2703 is amended to read:

12 § 2703. EXAMINING PETITIONS; SUPPLEMENTARY PETITIONS

13 The Secretary of State shall examine the petitions and ascertain whether
14 they conform to the provisions of this chapter, and sections 2353, 2354, and
15 2358 of this title. If found not to conform, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary shall state
16 in writing why a particular petition cannot be accepted, and within ~~72 hours~~
17 two business days from receipt ~~he or she~~ the Secretary shall return it to the
18 candidate in whose behalf it was filed. In such case, supplementary petitions
19 may be filed not later than 10 days after the deadline for filing petitions.

20 ~~However, supplementary petitions shall not be accepted if petitions with the~~

1 ~~signatures of at least 1,000 persons were not filed by the deadline for filing~~
2 petitions set forth in section 2702 of this chapter.

3 * * * Local Elections; Open Meeting Law Not Applicable to Annual
4 Meetings * * *

5 Sec. 29. 1 V.S.A. § 310 is amended to read:

6 § 310. DEFINITIONS

7 As used in this subchapter:

8 * * *

9 (5)(A) “Meeting” means a gathering of a quorum of the members of a
10 public body for the purpose of discussing the business of the public body or
11 for the purpose of taking action.

12 * * *

13 (E) “Meeting” does not mean a gathering of the voters of a
14 municipality for purposes of conducting an annual or special municipal
15 meeting.

16 (6) “Public body” means any board, council, or commission of the State
17 or one or more of its political subdivisions, any board, council, or commission
18 of any agency, authority, or instrumentality of the State or one or more of its
19 political subdivisions, or any committee or subcommittee of any of the
20 foregoing boards, councils, or commissions, except that “public body” does
21 not include.

1 ~~(A) councils or similar groups established by the Governor for the~~
2 sole purpose of advising the Governor with respect to policy; or

3 ~~(B) the voters of a municipality at an annual or special municipal~~
4 meeting.

5 * * *

6 * * * Local Elections; Cannabis Establishment Vote; Australian Ballot * * *

7 Sec. 30. 7 V.S.A. § 863 is amended to read:

8 § 863. REGULATION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

9 (a)(1) Prior to a cannabis retailer or the retail portion of an integrated
10 licensee operating within a municipality, the municipality shall affirmatively
11 permit the operation of such cannabis establishments by majority vote of those
12 ~~present and~~ voting by Australian ballot at an annual or special meeting ~~warned~~
13 for that purpose. A municipality may place retailers or integrated licensees, or
14 both, on the ballot for approval.

15 * * *

16 * * * Local Elections; Annual and Special Municipal Meetings * * *

17 Sec. 31. 17 V.S.A. chapter 55, subchapter 2 is amended to read:

18 Subchapter 2. ~~Town~~ Municipal Meetings and Local Elections in General

19 * * *

20 § 2640. ANNUAL MEETINGS

21

1 ~~(b)(1) When a town so votes, it may thereafter start its annual meeting on~~
2 any of the three days immediately preceding the first Tuesday in March at such
3 time as it elects and may transact at that time any business not involving voting
4 by Australian ballot or voting required by law to be by ballot and to be held on
5 the first Tuesday in March. A meeting so started shall be adjourned until the
6 first Tuesday in March.

7 * * *

8 (3) The affirmative vote of a town pursuant to subsection (a) of this
9 section shall remain in effect until rescinded by a majority vote of the voters at
10 an annual or special meeting duly warned for that purpose.

11 * *

12 § 2642. WARNING AND NOTICE CONTENTS

13 (a)(1) The warning shall include the date and time of the election, location
14 of the polling place or places, and the nature of the meeting or election.

15 * * *

16 (3)(A) The warning shall also contain any article or articles requested
17 by a petition signed by at least five percent of the voters of the municipality
18 and filed with the municipal clerk not less than 47 days before the day of the
19 meeting.

20

1 ~~(D) A voter may withdraw his or her the voter's name from a~~
2 ~~petitioned article at any time prior to the signing of the warning by a majority~~
3 ~~of the legislative body. The voter acting as the lead petitioner may withdraw~~
4 ~~the petitioned article in its entirety prior to the signing of the warning by a~~
5 ~~majority of the legislative body.~~

6 * * *

7 § 2645. CHARTERS; ADOPTION, REPEAL, OR AMENDMENT;
8 PROCEDURE

9 (a) A municipality may propose to the General Assembly to adopt, repeal,
10 or amend its charter by majority vote of the legal voters of the municipality
11 present and voting at any annual or special meeting warned for that purpose in
12 accordance with the following procedure:

13 * * *

14 (6)(A) ~~Notice of each public hearing and of the annual or special~~
15 ~~meeting shall be given in accordance with section 2641 of this chapter. Notice~~
16 ~~of each public hearing shall be given 10 days preceding the hearing and in the~~
17 ~~same locations and manner as required by section 2641 of this chapter.~~

18 * * *

19 § 2651a. CONSTABLES; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL; ELIMINATION
20 ~~OF OFFICE~~

1 ~~(a)(1) A town may vote by Australian ballot at an annual or special~~
2 meeting to authorize the selectboard to appoint a first constable, and if needed
3 a second constable, in which case at least a first constable shall be appointed.

4 * * *

5 (3) When a town votes to authorize the selectboard to appoint
6 constables, the selectboard's authority to make such the appointments shall
7 remain in effect until the town rescinds that authority by the majority vote of
8 the registered voters present and voting at an annual or special meeting duly
9 warned for that purpose.

10 (b) ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) to the contrary, a vote~~
11 ~~to authorize the selectboard to appoint constables shall become effective only~~
12 ~~upon a two-thirds vote of those present and voting if a written protest against~~
13 ~~the authorization is filed with the selectboard at least 15 days before the vote~~
14 ~~by at least five percent of the voters of the town. [Repealed.]~~

15 * * *

16 § 2651d. COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES; APPOINTMENT;

17 REMOVAL

18 (a)(1) A municipality may vote at an annual or special municipal meeting
19 to authorize the legislative body to appoint a collector of delinquent taxes, who
20 ~~may be the municipal treasurer.~~

1 ~~(2) A collector of delinquent taxes so appointed may be removed by the~~
2 ~~legislative body for just cause after notice and hearing~~ The appointment of a
3 collector of delinquent taxes shall be for a one-year term.

4 * * *

5 § 2651e. MUNICIPAL CLERK; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL

6 (a)(1) A municipality may vote at an annual meeting to authorize the
7 legislative body to appoint the municipal clerk.

8 ~~(2) A municipal clerk so appointed may be removed by the legislative~~
9 ~~body for just cause after notice and hearing~~ The appointment of a municipal
10 clerk shall be for a one-year term.

11 * * *

12 § 2651f. MUNICIPAL TREASURER; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL

13 (a)(1) A municipality may vote at an annual meeting to authorize the
14 legislative body to appoint the municipal treasurer.

15 ~~(2) A treasurer so appointed may be removed by the legislative body for~~
16 ~~just cause after notice and hearing~~ The appointment of a municipal treasurer
17 shall be for a one-year term.

18 * * *

19 § 2662. VALIDATION OF MUNICIPAL MEETINGS

20 When any of the requirements as to notice or warning of an annual or
21 ~~special municipal meeting have been omitted or not complied with, the~~

1 ~~omission or noncompliance, if the meeting and the business transacted at it is~~
2 otherwise legal and within the scope of the municipal powers, may be
3 corrected and legalized by vote at a regular meeting or special meeting of the
4 municipality called and duly warned for that purpose. The question to be
5 voted upon shall substantially be, "Shall the action taken at the meeting of this
6 town (or city, village or district) held on (state date) in spite of the fact that
7 (state the error or omission), and any act or action of the municipal officers or
8 agents pursuant thereto be readopted, ratified, and confirmed." Errors or
9 omissions in the conduct of an original meeting that are not the result of an
10 unlawful notice or warning or noncompliance within the scope of the warning,
11 including technical errors within the content of a ballot, may be cured by a
12 resolution of the legislative body of the municipality by a vote of two-thirds of
13 all its members at a regular meeting or a special meeting called for that
14 purpose, stating that the defect was the result of oversight, inadvertence, or
15 mistake. When an error or omission of this nature has been thus corrected by
16 resolution, all business within the terms of the action of the qualified voters
17 shall be as valid as if the requirements had been initially complied with,
18 condition, however, that the original action thereby corrected by the legislative
19 body was in compliance with the legal exercise of its corporate powers.

20 * * *

1 ~~See 32-17 V.S.A. chapter 55, subchapter 3 is amended to read:~~

2 Subchapter 3. Local Elections Using the Australian Ballot System

3 § 2680. AUSTRALIAN BALLOT SYSTEM; GENERAL

4 * * *

5 (h) Hearing.

6 (1) Whenever a municipality has voted to adopt the Australian ballot
7 system of voting on any public question or budget, except the budget revote as
8 provided in subsection (c) of this section or as otherwise specified in State law
9 requiring the use of Australian ballot of system of voting but not expressly
10 requiring an informational hearing, the legislative body shall hold a public
11 informational hearing on the question by posting warnings at least 10 days in
12 advance of the hearing in at least two public places within the municipality and
13 in the town clerk's office.

14 * * *

15 § 2681. NOMINATIONS; PETITIONS; CONSENTS

16 (a)(1)(A) Nominations of the municipal officers shall be by petition. The
17 petition shall be filed with the municipal clerk, together with the endorsement,
18 if any, of any party or parties in accordance with the provisions of this title, not
19 later than 5:00 p.m. on the ~~sixth~~ fifth Monday preceding the day of the
20 ~~election, which shall be the filing deadline.~~

1 ~~(P) A candidate shall be registered to vote in the town he or she the~~
2 candidate is seeking office at or before the time of filing the petition.

3 * * *

4 * * * Local Elections; Fire Districts; Voters * * *

5 Sec. 33. 20 V.S.A. § 2485 is amended to read:

6 § 2485. OFFICERS GENERALLY

7 ~~A~~ The voters of a fire district shall elect at its first meeting and at each
8 annual meeting thereafter a clerk, a treasurer, and a collector of taxes. ~~Such~~
9 ~~fire district~~ The voters may elect a chief engineer and ~~such~~ any assistant
10 engineers as are necessary, whether or not they are inhabitants of the district,
11 who shall rank in the order of their election. ~~Such~~ The officers shall hold
12 office until the next annual meeting and until others are elected. A vacancy in
13 any office may be filled by the prudential committee. ~~Such district at its~~ At
14 the district's first meeting, the voters shall elect a prudential committee that
15 shall consist of three persons, who shall serve for one, two, and three years,
16 respectively. ~~Thereafter at~~ At each subsequent annual meeting, a member of
17 ~~such~~ the prudential committee shall be elected for the term of three years. If
18 the fire district so votes, two additional persons may be elected to ~~such~~ the
19 committee for a term of one year. A vacancy in ~~such~~ the committee may be
20 filled at an annual meeting, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, but
21 ~~the selectboard legislative body of the town municipality in which such the~~

1 ~~district is located may fill a vacancy in such the committee until an election by~~
2 the appointment of a resident of such the district. When a meeting is not held
3 on the second Monday in January, the officers of the district may be elected at
4 a special meeting. The officers shall be elected by ballot if demanded by a
5 voter and confirmed by a majority vote.

6 * * * Local Elections; Vacancies in Town Offices * * *

7 Sec. 34. 24 V.S.A. chapter 33, subchapter 6 is amended to read:

8 Subchapter 6. Vacancies in Town Offices

9 § 961. VACANCY OR SUSPENSION OF OFFICER'S DUTIES

10 (a) When a an elected municipal officer resigns the officer's office, has
11 been removed from the office, dies, becomes unable to perform the officer's
12 duties due to a mental condition or psychiatric disability, or removes from
13 ~~town~~ the municipality, the office shall become vacant. Notice of this vacancy
14 shall be posted by the legislative body in at least two public places in the
15 municipality, and in and near the municipal clerk's office, within 10 days of
16 after the creation of the vacancy.

17 * * *

18 § 962. SPECIAL MUNICIPAL MEETING

19 A ~~town~~ municipality at a special municipal meeting may fill a vacancy in a
20 ~~town~~ municipal office.

1 ~~§ 962. DUTIES OF SELECTBOARD; SPECIAL MEETING~~

2 (a) When a vacancy occurs in any town office, the selectboard forthwith by
3 appointment in writing shall fill ~~such~~ the vacancy until an election is had;
4 except that in the event of vacancies in a majority of the selectboard at the
5 same time, ~~such~~ the vacancies shall be filled by a special ~~town~~ municipal
6 meeting called for that purpose. Notwithstanding the provisions of this
7 subsection, the selectboard shall not be required to fill a vacancy that occurs
8 within 90 days before the date of the municipality's annual meeting.

9 (b) The selectboard shall file an appointment made under this section in the
10 office of the ~~town~~ municipal clerk and the ~~town~~ clerk shall duly record it in the
11 book of ~~town~~ municipal records.

12 (c) If there are no selectboard members in office, the Secretary of State
13 shall call a special election to fill any vacancies and for that interim shall
14 appoint and authorize the ~~town~~ municipal clerk or another qualified person to
15 draw orders for payment of continuing obligations and necessary expenses
16 until the vacancies are filled.

17 * * * Local Elections; Authority of Constables * * *

18 Sec. 35. 24 V.S.A. § 1529 is amended to read:

19 § 1529. FIRST CONSTABLE AS COLLECTOR

20 The first constable, if elected, shall be collector of State, county, town, and
21 ~~town school district taxes when a collector of taxes is not appointed or elected~~

1 ~~at the annual town meeting, and shall pay over the taxes collected agreeably to~~
2 the warrants for their collection.

3 Sec. 36. 24 V.S.A. § 1936a is amended to read:

4 § 1936a. CONSTABLES; POWERS AND QUALIFICATIONS

5 (a) A town may vote at a special or annual town meeting to prohibit
6 constables from exercising any law enforcement authority. A vote to prohibit
7 constables from exercising any law enforcement authority shall remain in
8 effect until rescinded by the majority vote of the registered voters at an annual
9 or special meeting duly warned for that purpose.

10 * * *

11 * * * Effective Date * * *

12 Sec. 37. EFFECTIVE DATE

13 ~~This act shall take effect on passage.~~

Sec. 1. [Deleted.]

Sec. 2. [Deleted.]

Sec. 3. [Deleted.]

** * * One-Bite Candidacy * * **

Sec. 4. 17 V.S.A. § 2381 is amended to read:

§ 2381. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

** * **

(c) In no event shall a candidate who loses a major party primary be nominated to appear on the general election ballot pursuant to this subchapter by a committee of any party other than the party for which the candidate appeared on the primary ballot.

Sec. 5. 17 V.S.A. § 2401 is amended to read:

§ 2401. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

(a) A person may be nominated and have ~~his or her~~ the person's name printed on the general election ballot for any office by filing a consent similar in form to the consent prescribed by section 2361 of this title and a statement of nomination with the Secretary of State. In the case of a nomination for justice of the peace, the consent form and statement of nomination shall be filed with the town clerk.

(b) A candidate who loses a major party primary for any office shall not appear on the general election ballot as an independent candidate for the same office for which the candidate lost in the primary election.

Sec. 6. [Deleted.]

* * * Miscellaneous Changes to Electronic Ballot Delivery Law * * *

Sec. 7. 17 V.S.A. § 2539 is amended to read:

§ 2539. DELIVERY OF EARLY VOTER ABSENTEE BALLOTS

* * *

(c) Military or overseas voters.

(1) Early voter absentee ballots for military or overseas voters shall be sent air mail, first class, postpaid when such service is available, or they may be electronically delivered when requested by the voter.

(2)(A) The town clerk's office shall be open on the 46th day before any election that includes a federal office and the town clerk shall send on or before that day all absentee ballots to any military or overseas voter who requested an early voter absentee ballot on or before that day.

(B) On that day the town clerk shall complete any reporting requirements and any other responsibilities regarding the mailing of early voter absentee ballots to military or overseas voters, as directed by the Secretary of State.

(3) As used in this section, "overseas voters" means a person who was last domiciled in Vermont before leaving the United States and now resides outside the United States.

(d) Voters who participate in the Secretary of State's Address Confidentiality Program. In the case of persons who participate in the address confidentiality program administered by the Secretary of State set forth in 15 V.S.A. § 1152, if the voter or authorized person requests in the application or otherwise that early voter absentee ballots be mailed or electronically delivered, the town clerk shall mail or electronically deliver the ballots.

Sec. 8. [Deleted.]

** * * Write-in Candidate Registration and Minimum Thresholds in Primary
Elections * * **

Sec. 9. 17 V.S.A. § 2370 is amended to read:

§ 2370. WRITE-IN CANDIDATES

(a)(1) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under section 2587 of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the primary election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary of State's office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, a write-in candidate is not required to file if:

(A) the candidate has already filed a consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot for a major political party, as provided in section 2361, 2385, or 2402 of this title; or

(B) no candidate is printed on the ballot, or if a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot dies or is otherwise disqualified prior to 7:00 p.m. on the election day.

(b) A write-in candidate shall not qualify as a primary winner unless ~~he or she~~ the candidate receives at least one-half the number of votes as the number of signatures required for his or her the candidate's office on a primary petition, except that if a write-in candidate receives more votes than a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot, ~~he or she may~~ the write-in candidate shall qualify as a primary winner.

~~(b)(c)~~ The Before becoming the party's candidate in the general election, the write-in candidate who qualifies as a primary winner under this section must;

(1) still be determined a winner under section 2369 of this chapter before he or she becomes the party's candidate in the general election; and

(2) file a consent similar in form to the consent prescribed by sections 2361, 2385, and 2402 of this title with the Secretary of State.

Sec. 10. 17 V.S.A. § 2472 is amended to read:

§ 2472. CONTENTS

* * *

(b)(1) Each office to be voted upon shall be separately indicated and preceded by the word "For," as: "For United States Senator." Beneath the

office to be voted upon shall appear the instructions: “Vote for not more than (the number of candidates to be elected).”

* * *

(5)(A) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under section 2587 of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State’s design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within the candidate’s applicable district or the Secretary of State’s office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection (b) as soon as practicable.

(B) Notwithstanding subdivision (A) of this subdivision (b)(5), a write-in candidate is not required to file if:

(i) the candidate has already filed a consent to the printing of the candidate’s name on the ballot for a major political party, as provided in section 2361, 2385, or 2402 of this title; or

(ii) no candidate is printed on the ballot, or if a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot dies or is otherwise disqualified prior to 7:00 p.m. on the election day.

* * *

Sec. 11. 17 V.S.A. § 2587 is amended to read:

§ 2587. RULES FOR COUNTING VOTES

* * *

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

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

(A) count write-in votes:

(i) for candidates who have filed in compliance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title or who have filed a consent to the printing of the candidate’s name on the ballot for a major political party, as provided in section 2361, 2385, or 2402 of this title; or

(ii) for all candidates if no candidate is printed on the ballot, or if a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot dies or is otherwise disqualified prior to 7:00 p.m. on election day;

~~(B) On each tally sheet, the counters shall add together the names of candidates counted under subdivision (A) of this subdivision (e)(2) that are clearly the same person, even though a nickname or last name is used.; and~~

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

~~(C) record the name and vote totals on the tally sheet only of a write-in candidate having votes counted pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (e)(2) and list those candidates individually, and record all other write-in votes on the tally sheet as in aggregate as "other write-ins."~~

~~(3) Notwithstanding any contrary provisions in subdivision (2)(A) of this subsection, if the number of "other write-ins" for the same nomination or office equals or exceeds the number of votes cast for any candidate for the same nomination or office who appears to have been nominated or elected, election officials shall record the name and vote totals on the tally sheet for all candidates for that nomination or office. If this result occurs in a multiple-municipality district, but one or more municipalities did not record the name and vote totals for all candidates, the Secretary of State, on the day after the election, shall order the town clerk to reconvene the board of civil authority. In the presence of at least two other election officials who are not members of the same political party, the clerk shall open the ballot containers, list all write-ins for this nomination or office individually, and record write-in votes~~

for all candidates. The clerk shall then place the entire contents in containers,
affix new seals, and transmit the new seal numbers.

* * *

Sec. 12. 17 V.S.A. § 2702 is amended to read:

§ 2702. NOMINATING PETITION

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

(b) Petitions shall be filed not later than 5:00 p.m. on the 15th day of December preceding the primary election.

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

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

(e) Each petition shall be accompanied by a filing fee of \$2,000.00 to be paid to the Secretary of State. However, if the petition of a candidate is accompanied by the affidavit of the candidate, which shall be available for public inspection, that the candidate and the candidate's campaign committee are without sufficient funds to pay the filing fee, the Secretary of State shall waive all but \$300.00 of the payment of the filing fee by that candidate.

(f)(1) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under section 2587 of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the election, a write-in candidate for nomination shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes for that office in every major political party's primary results listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary of State's office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, a write-in candidate is not required to file if:

(A) the candidate has already filed a consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot for a major political party, as provided in section 2361, 2385, or 2402 of this title; or

(B) no candidate is printed on the ballot, or if a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot dies or is otherwise disqualified prior to 7:00 p.m. on the election day.

** * * Campaign Finance; Reporting Thresholds * * **

Sec. 13. 17 V.S.A. § 2921 is amended to read:

§ 2921. CANDIDATES; REGISTRATION; CHECKING ACCOUNT;

TREASURER CANDIDATES

(a)(1) Each candidate who ~~has made expenditures or accepted~~ contributions of \$500.00 or more in an election cycle files a consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot, as provided in section 2361, 2370, 2385, or 2402 of this title, shall register with the Secretary of State within 10 days of reaching the \$500.00 threshold or on the date that the next report is required of the candidate under this chapter, whichever occurs first, prior to filing the consent stating his or her the candidate's full name and address; the office the candidate is seeking; the name and address of the bank in which the candidate maintains his or her campaign checking account; and the name and address of the treasurer responsible for maintaining the checking account. A candidate's treasurer may be the candidate or his or her the candidate's spouse.

(2) A candidate's consent, subsequently filed in accordance with section 2361, 2385, or 2402 of this title, shall state the candidate's name the same as it appears on this registration.

(3) Each candidate who makes an expenditure shall file with the Secretary of State, at the time of making the first expenditure, the name and

address of the bank in which the candidate maintains the campaign checking account.

* * *

Sec. 14. 17 V.S.A. § 2922 is amended to read:

§ 2922. REGISTRATION; POLITICAL COMMITTEES; REGISTRATION;

CHECKING ACCOUNT; TREASURER INDEPENDENT

EXPENDITURE-ONLY POLITICAL COMMITTEES

(a)(1) Each political committee or independent expenditure-only political committee shall register with the Secretary of State within 10 days of after making expenditures of \$1,000.00 \$500.00 or more and or accepting contributions of \$1,000.00 \$500.00 or more, stating its full name and address; Committees that are not self-funded individuals shall also state the name and address of the bank in which it maintains its campaign checking account; and the name and address of the treasurer responsible for maintaining the checking account.

* * *

(b) All expenditures by a political committee or an independent expenditure-only political committee shall be paid by either a credit card or a debit card, check, or other electronic transfer from the single campaign checking account in the bank designated by the political committee under subsection (a) of this section, or, if under \$250.00, the political committee may

make the expenditure from cash from that campaign checking account if accompanied by a receipt, a copy of which shall be maintained by the ~~political~~ committee for at least two years from the end of the two-year general election cycle in which the expenditure was made. A self-funded individual need not utilize a campaign checking account, but shall otherwise comply with this section. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the payment of fees required to be made from a separately held online account designated solely to collect campaign contributions made to the ~~political~~ committee.

(c) A political committee or an independent expenditure-only political committee whose principal place of business or whose treasurer is not located in this State shall file a statement with the Secretary of State designating a person who resides in this State upon whom may be served any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the ~~political~~ committee. This statement shall be filed at the same time as the registration required in subsection (a) of this section.

Sec. 15. 17 V.S.A. § 2964 is amended to read:

§ 2964. CAMPAIGN REPORTS; CANDIDATES FOR STATE OFFICE,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND COUNTY OFFICE;

POLITICAL COMMITTEES; INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE-

ONLY POLITICAL COMMITTEES; POLITICAL PARTIES

(a)(1) Each candidate for State office, the General Assembly, or a two-year-term county office who has rolled over any amount of surplus into ~~his or her~~ the candidate's new campaign or who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of \$500.00 or more during the two-year general election cycle and, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, each political committee and independent expenditure-only political committee that has not filed a final report pursuant to subsection 2965(b) of this chapter, and each political party required to register under section 2923 of this chapter shall file with the Secretary of State campaign finance reports as follows:

*(A) in the first year of the two-year general election cycle, on July 1;
and*

(B) in the second year of the two-year general election cycle:

(i) on March 15;

(ii) on July 1 and August 1;

(iii) on September 1;

(iv) on October 1, October 15, and the Friday before the general election; and

(v) two weeks after the general election.

(2) Each candidate for a four-year-term county office who has rolled over any amount of surplus into ~~his or her~~ the candidate's new campaign or who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of \$500.00 or more

during the four-year general election cycle shall file with the Secretary of State campaign finance reports as follows:

(A) in the first three years of the four-year general election cycle, on July 1; and

(B) in the fourth year of the four-year general election cycle:

(i) on March 15;

(ii) on July 1 and August 1;

(iii) on September 1;

(iv) on October 1, October 15, and the Friday before the general election; and

(v) two weeks after the general election.

(b)(1) A political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or a political party that has accepted contributions or made expenditures of ~~\$1,000.00~~ \$500.00 or more during the local election cycle for the purpose of influencing a local election or supporting or opposing one or more candidates in a local election shall file with the Secretary of State campaign finance reports regarding that local election 30 days before, 10 days before, and two weeks after the local election.

* * *

(c) ~~The failure of a candidate, political committee, or political party to file a report under this section shall be deemed an affirmative statement that a~~

~~report is not required of the candidate, political committee, or political party under this section. A candidate, political committee, independent expenditure-only committee, or political party that is not otherwise required to file a report pursuant to this section shall file with the Secretary of State a report and affirmative statement that the candidate, political committee, independent expenditure-only committee, or political party has not either rolled over any amount of surplus into a new campaign or made expenditures or accepted contributions in the amounts specified in this section.~~

Sec. 16. REPEAL

~~17 V.S.A. § 2966 (reports by candidates not reaching monetary reporting threshold) is repealed.~~

Sec. 17. 17 V.S.A. § 2970 is amended to read:

*§ 2970. CAMPAIGN REPORTS; ~~OTHER ENTITIES~~; PUBLIC
QUESTIONS*

(a) Any formal or informal political action committee ~~of two or more individuals or a corporation, labor organization, public interest group, or other entity, not including a political party, or independent expenditure-only political committee~~ that makes expenditures of ~~\$1,000.00~~ \$500.00 or more during the election cycle for the purpose of advocating a position on a public question or influencing an election in any election shall file a report of its

expenditures 30 days before, 10 days before, and two weeks after the election with the Secretary of State.

* * *

** * * Campaign Finance; Independent Expenditure-Only*

*Political Committees * * **

Sec. 17a. 17 V.S.A. § 2901 is amended to read:

§ 2901. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(10) “Independent expenditure-only political committee” means ~~a political committee that~~ any one or more individuals, or any corporation, labor organization, public interest group, or other entity, excluding a political party, that accepts contributions or makes expenditures in any amounts within any two-year general election cycle for the purpose of supporting or opposing candidates, influencing an election, or advocating for or against a public question; conducts its activities entirely independent of candidates; does not give contributions to candidates, political committees, or political parties; does not make related expenditures; and is not closely related to a political party or to a political committee that makes contributions to candidates or makes related expenditures. “Independent expenditure-only political committee” includes any “self-funded individual,” meaning an individual who

receives no contributions from any other source for the purpose of supporting or opposing candidates, influencing an election, or advocating for or against a public question.

* * *

(13) “Political committee” or “political action committee” means any formal or informal committee of ~~two~~ one or more individuals or a corporation, labor organization, public interest group, or other entity, not including a political party, that accepts contributions of ~~\$1,000.00~~ or ~~more~~ and makes expenditures of ~~\$1,000.00~~ or ~~more~~ in any amounts in any two-year general election cycle for the purpose of supporting or opposing one or more candidates, influencing an election, or advocating a position on a public question in any election, and includes ~~an independent expenditure-only political committee~~ and a legislative leadership political committee.

* * *

Sec. 17b. 17 V.S.A. § 2925 is amended to read:

§ 2925. POLITICAL COMMITTEES; SURPLUS CAMPAIGN

FUNDS

(a) A member of a political committee or an independent expenditure-only political committee that has surplus funds after all campaign debts have been paid shall not convert the surplus to personal use.

* * *

Sec. 17c. 17 V.S.A. § 2945 is amended to read:

§ 2945. ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS

(a) A candidate, political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party accepts a contribution when the contribution is deposited in the candidate's, committee's, or party's campaign account or five business days after the candidate, committee, or party receives it, whichever comes first.

(b) A candidate, political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party shall not accept a monetary contribution in excess of \$100.00 unless made by check, credit or debit card, or other electronic transfer.

Sec. 17d. 17 V.S.A. § 2962 is amended to read:

§ 2962. REPORTS; GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) Any report required to be submitted to the Secretary of State under this chapter shall contain the statement "I hereby certify that the information provided on all pages of this campaign finance disclosure report is true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief" and places for the signature of the candidate or the treasurer of the candidate, political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party.

* * *

Sec. 17e. 17 V.S.A. § 2965 is amended to read:

*§ 2965. ~~FINAL REPORTS; CANDIDATES FOR STATE OFFICE, THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND COUNTY OFFICE; POLITICAL
COMMITTEES; POLITICAL PARTIES; END-OF-
CYCLE REPORTS FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEES AND
POLITICAL PARTIES~~*

** * **

(b)(1) At any time, but not later than December 15 following the general election, each political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party that has not filed a final report as set forth in subdivision (2) of this subsection shall file an end-of-cycle report that lists a complete accounting of all contributions and expenditures since the last report.

(2) At any time, a political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or a political party may file a “final report” that lists a complete accounting of all contributions and expenditures since the last report and liquidation of surplus and that shall constitute the termination of its campaign activities.

Sec. 17f. 17 V.S.A. § 2972 is amended to read:

§ 2972. IDENTIFICATION IN ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATIONS

(a) An electioneering communication shall contain the name and mailing address of the person, candidate, political committee, independent

expenditure-only political committee, or political party that paid for the communication. The name and address shall appear prominently and in a manner such that a reasonable person would clearly understand by whom the expenditure has been made, except that:

(1) An audio electioneering communication paid for by a candidate does not need to contain the candidate's address.

(2) An electioneering communication paid for by a person acting as an agent or consultant on behalf of another person, candidate, political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party shall clearly designate the name and mailing address of the person, candidate, political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party on whose behalf the communication is published or broadcast.

** * **

(c)(1) In addition to the identification requirements in subsections (a) and (b) of this section, an electioneering communication paid for by or on behalf of a political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party shall contain the name of any contributor who contributed more than 25 percent of all contributions and more than \$2,000.00 to that committee or party since the beginning of the two-year general election cycle in which the electioneering communication was made to the date on which the expenditure for the electioneering communication was made.

(2) For the purposes of this subsection, a ~~political~~ committee or political party shall be treated as having made an expenditure if the committee or party or person acting on behalf of the committee or party has executed a contract to make the expenditure.

** * **

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

*§ 2973. SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR RADIO,
TELEVISION, OR INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS*

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

(b) If the person who paid for the communication is not an individual, the audio statement required by this section shall include the name of that person and the name and title of the treasurer in the case of a political committee, independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party or the principal officer in the case of any other person that is not an individual.

** * * Audits of Voter Checklists and District Boundaries * * **

Sec. 18. AUDITS OF VOTER CHECKLISTS AND DISTRICT

BOUNDARIES

(a) On or before September 15, 2025, local boards of civil authority and town clerks whose municipal boundaries are divided for the purpose of Representative districts and Senatorial districts shall audit their voter checklists to ensure that those checklists accurately correspond to the prescribed district boundaries.

(b) On or before October 1, 2025, each town clerk described in subsection (a) of this section shall provide a written summary of the audit to the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office.

(c) On or before November 15, 2025, the Secretary shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations with the findings of the audits.

(d) Within two weeks after passage of this act, the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office shall notify each town clerk and board of civil authority described in subsection (a) of this section that they must perform the audits.

(e) The Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office shall provide support and training to each town clerk and board of civil authority described in subsection (a) of this section.

* * * *Deadline Modifications and Miscellaneous Clarifications* * * *

Sec. 20. 17 V.S.A. § 1971 is amended to read:

§ 1971. *CASTING MORE THAN ONE BALLOT*

A legal voter who knowingly ~~casts more than one ballot at any one time of~~ ~~balloting~~ votes more than once in any election held in this State, or who votes in both this State and another state or territory in the same or equivalent election for the same office shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 if the offense is committed at a primary or general election, and not more than \$100.00 if committed at a local election.

Sec. 21. *REPEAL*

17 V.S.A. § 1973 (voting in more than one place) is repealed.

Sec. 22. 17 V.S.A. § 2103 is amended to read:

§ 2103. *DEFINITIONS*

As used in this title, unless the context or a specific definition requires a different reading:

* * *

(6) “Campaign” means any organized or coordinated activity undertaken by ~~two~~ one or more persons, any part of which is designed to

influence the nomination, election, or defeat of any candidate or the passage, defeat, or modification of any public question.

* * *

Sec. 23. 17 V.S.A. § 2358 is amended to read:

§ 2358. EXAMINING PETITIONS; SUPPLEMENTARY PETITIONS

* * *

(b) If found not to conform, ~~he or she~~ the officer shall state in writing on a particular petition why it cannot be accepted, and within ~~72 hours~~ two business days from receipt, ~~he or she~~ the officer shall return it to the candidate in whose behalf it was filed. In such case, supplementary petitions may be filed not later than 10 days after the date for filing petitions. However, supplementary petitions shall not be accepted if petitions with signatures of different persons totaling at least the required number were not received by the filing deadline.

* * *

Sec. 24. [Deleted.]

Sec. 25. 17 V.S.A. § 2413 is amended to read:

§ 2413. NOMINATION OF JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

(a)(1) The party members in each town, on or before the third Monday in July before each primary election, upon the call of the town committee, may meet in caucus and nominate candidates for justice of the peace.

* * *

(e) For any nomination made under this section, the chair and secretary of the committee or caucus shall file the statement required by section 2385 of this title by 5:00 p.m. on the ~~third day following~~ fourth Monday in July before the primary election.

Sec. 26. 17 V.S.A. § 2402 is amended to read:

§ 2402. REQUISITES OF STATEMENT

* * *

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

* * *

(B) in the case of nomination for justice of the peace, not earlier than the fourth Monday in April and not later than 5:00 p.m. on the third ~~day~~ following the Monday in July before each primary election; or

* * *

Sec. 27. 17 V.S.A. § 2546 is amended to read:

§ 2546. RECEIPT OF BALLOTS BY CLERK; VOTER STATUS;

OPPORTUNITY TO CURE; PROCESSING ABSENTEE

BALLOTS

(a) Town clerk; process generally. Beginning ~~30~~ 45 days before the opening of the polls on election day, upon receipt of a mailing envelope

containing ballots returned by a voter, the town clerk shall, within three business days or on the next day the office is open for business, whichever is later, direct two election officials working together to do all of the following:

** * **

Sec. 28. 17 V.S.A. § 2703 is amended to read:

§ 2703. EXAMINING PETITIONS; SUPPLEMENTARY PETITIONS

The Secretary of State shall examine the petitions and ascertain whether they conform to the provisions of this chapter, and sections 2353, 2354, and 2358 of this title. If found not to conform, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary shall state in writing why a particular petition cannot be accepted, and within ~~72 hours~~ two business days from receipt ~~he or she, the Secretary~~ shall return it to the candidate in whose behalf it was filed. In such case, supplementary petitions may be filed not later than 10 days after the deadline for filing petitions. However, supplementary petitions shall not be accepted if petitions with the signatures of at least 1,000 persons were not filed by the deadline for filing petitions set forth in section 2702 of this chapter.

** * * Local Elections; Open Meeting Law Not Applicable to Annual*

*Meetings * * **

Sec. 29. 1 V.S.A. § 310 is amended to read:

§ 310. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

* * *

(5)(A) “Meeting” means a gathering of a quorum of the members of a public body for the purpose of discussing the business of the public body or for the purpose of taking action.

* * *

(E) “Meeting” does not mean a gathering of the voters of a municipality for purposes of conducting an annual or special municipal meeting.

(6) “Public body” means any board, council, or commission of the State or one or more of its political subdivisions, any board, council, or commission of any agency, authority, or instrumentality of the State or one or more of its political subdivisions, or any committee or subcommittee of any of the foregoing boards, councils, or commissions, except that “public body” does not include:

(A) councils or similar groups established by the Governor for the sole purpose of advising the Governor with respect to policy; or

(B) the voters of a municipality at an annual or special municipal meeting.

* * *

Sec. 30. [Deleted.]

Sec. 31. [Deleted.]

Sec. 32. [Deleted.]

Sec. 33. [Deleted.]

Sec. 34. [Deleted.]

Sec. 35. [Deleted.]

Sec. 36. [Deleted.]

** * * Automatic Voter Registration * * **

Sec. 37. 17 V.S.A. § 2145a is amended to read:

*§ 2145a. REGISTRATIONS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR
VEHICLES*

(a) An application for, or renewal of, a motor vehicle driver's license or nondriver identification card shall serve as a simultaneous application to register to vote if the applicant attests to U.S. citizenship or the Department has proof of U.S. citizenship unless the applicant checks the box on the application designating that ~~he or she~~ the applicant declines to use the application as a voter registration application.

(b)(1) A motor vehicle driver's license or nondriver identification card application shall provide and request the following information and shall be in the form approved by the Secretary of State:

(A) The applicant's citizenship.

(B) The applicant's place and date of birth.

(C) The applicant's town of legal residence.

(D) The applicant's E-911 street address or a description of the physical location of the applicant's residence. The description must contain sufficient information so that the town clerk can determine whether the applicant is a resident of the town.

(E) The voter's oath.

(F) The applicant's ~~e-mail~~ email address and phone number, which shall be optional to provide.

** * **

(d)(1) The Department of Motor Vehicles shall transmit motor vehicle driver's license and nondriver identification card applications received under this section to the Secretary of State not later than five days after the date the application was accepted by the Department, or before the date of any primary or general election, whichever is sooner.

(2) The Department of Motor Vehicles shall not transmit motor vehicle driver's license and nondriver identification card applications when the Department does not have proof of U.S. citizenship for an applicant and the applicant has failed to attest to U.S. citizenship, or when the applicant has designated that ~~he or she~~ the applicant declines to be registered.

(3) The Department of Motor Vehicles shall ensure confidentiality of records as required by subdivision (b)(2)(A) of this section.

* * *

Sec. 38. [Deleted.]

Sec. 39. [Deleted.]

* * * *Effective Date* * * *

Sec. 40. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.