

1 H.474

2 An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election law

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

4 * * * Ranked-Choice Voting Report * * *

5 Sec. 1. REPORT

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

11 Sec. 2. [Deleted.]

12 Sec. 3. [Deleted.]

13 * * * One-Bite Candidacy * * *

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

15 § 2381. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

16 * * *

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

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

2 § 2401. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

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

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

12 * * * Electronic Ballot Returns Report and Miscellaneous Changes to
13 Electronic Ballot Delivery Law * * *

14 Sec. 6. REPORT

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

1 V.S.A. § 1152, if the voter or authorized person requests in the application or
2 otherwise that early voter absentee ballots be mailed or electronically
3 delivered, the town clerk shall mail or electronically deliver the ballots.

4 * * * Candidate Demographic Information * * *

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

6 § 2665. NOTIFICATION TO SECRETARY OF STATE

7 (a) The town clerk shall file with the Secretary of State a list of ~~the names~~
8 ~~and addresses of the selectboard members elected and~~ candidates that includes
9 the candidates' street addresses, email addresses, sought office, and the end
10 date of the term of office of each selectboard member, city councilor, village
11 trustee, and mayor elected. The town clerk shall notify the Secretary of State
12 of any changes in the list as filed.

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

18 (c) Information about a candidate's gender, age, or race or ethnicity
19 collected pursuant to this subsection is exempt from public inspection and
20 copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept confidential, except

1 that the Secretary of State may publish information pertaining to candidates'
2 gender, age, or race or ethnicity in aggregate form.

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

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

6 § 2370. WRITE-IN CANDIDATES

7 (a) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under subdivision
8 2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary election, a
9 write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal
10 office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design affirming that
11 the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3)
12 of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within
13 the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary of State's Office in an
14 electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall
15 notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this
16 subsection as soon as practicable.

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

1 candidate shall qualify as a primary winner. Notwithstanding the provisions of
2 subsection (a) of this section, a candidate who has not filed in accordance with
3 subsection (a) shall qualify as a primary winner if the candidate otherwise
4 complies with the provisions of this subsection.

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

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

10 § 2472. CONTENTS

11 * * *

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

16 * * *

17 (5)(A) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under
18 subdivision 2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary
19 election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or
20 any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design
21 affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under

1 subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with
2 either all town clerks within the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary
3 of State's Office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The
4 Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made
5 in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

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

10 * * *

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

12 § 2587. RULES FOR COUNTING VOTES

13 * * *

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

19 (2) A vote for a write-in candidate shall be counted as a write-in vote
20 that is without requisite filings unless the write-in candidate filed in accordance

1 with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title. The clerk shall record the name
2 and vote totals of a write-in candidate who has complied with this section.

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

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

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

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

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

2 § 2702. NOMINATING PETITION

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

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

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

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

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

19 (f)(1) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under
20 subdivision 2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary
21 election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or

1 any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design
2 affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under
3 subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with
4 either all town clerks within the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary
5 of State's Office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The
6 Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made
7 in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

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

12 * * * Campaign Finance * * *

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

14 § 2921. CANDIDATES; REGISTRATION; CHECKING ACCOUNT;
15 TREASURER

16 (a)(1) Each candidate who ~~has made expenditures or accepted contributions~~
17 ~~of \$500.00 or more in an election cycle~~ files a consent to the printing of the
18 candidate's name on the ballot, as provided in section 2361 of this title, shall
19 register with the Secretary of State ~~within 10 days of reaching the \$500.00~~
20 ~~threshold or on the date that the next report is required of the candidate under~~

1 ~~this chapter, whichever occurs first, prior to filing the consent~~ stating ~~his or her~~
2 the candidate's full name and address; and the office the candidate is seeking;

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

9 * * *

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

11 § 2964. CAMPAIGN REPORTS; CANDIDATES FOR STATE OFFICE,
12 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND COUNTY OFFICE;
13 POLITICAL COMMITTEES; POLITICAL PARTIES

14 (a)(1) Each candidate for State office, the General Assembly, or a two-
15 year-term county office who ~~has rolled over any amount of surplus into his or~~
16 ~~her new campaign or who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of~~
17 ~~\$500.00 or more during the two-year general election cycle and, except as~~
18 ~~provided in subsection (b) of this section, each political committee that has not~~
19 ~~filed a final report pursuant to subsection 2965(b) of this chapter, and each~~
20 political party required to register under section 2923 of this chapter shall file
21 with the Secretary of State campaign finance reports as follows:

1

* * *

2

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

7

* * *

8

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

9

§ 2901. DEFINITIONS

10

As used in this chapter:

11

* * *

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(10) ~~“Independent expenditure only political committee” means a~~
~~political committee that 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.~~

18

19

20

(11) “Mass media activity” means a television commercial, radio
commercial, ~~Internet~~ internet advertisement, mass mailing, mass electronic or
digital communication, literature drop, newspaper or periodical advertisement,

1 robotic phone call, or telephone bank, that includes the name or likeness of a
2 clearly identified candidate for office.

3 ~~(12)~~(11) “Party candidate listing” means any communication by a
4 political party that:

5 * * *

6 ~~(13)~~(12) “Political committee” or “political action committee” means
7 any formal or informal committee of ~~two~~ one or more individuals or a
8 corporation, labor organization, public interest group, or other entity, not
9 including a political party, that accepts contributions of \$1,000.00 or more ~~and~~
10 or makes expenditures of \$1,000.00 or more in any two-year general election
11 cycle for the purpose of supporting or opposing one or more candidates,
12 influencing an election, or advocating a position on a public question in any
13 election, and includes ~~an independent expenditure only political committee a~~
14 public question campaign and a legislative leadership political committee.

15 ~~(14)~~(13) “Political party” means a political party organized under
16 chapter 45 of this title and any committee established, financed, maintained, or
17 controlled by the party, including any subsidiary, branch, or local unit thereof,
18 and shall be considered a single, unified political party. The national affiliate
19 of the political party shall be considered a separate political party.

20 ~~(15)~~(14) “Public question” means an issue that is before the voters for a
21 binding decision.

1 report with the Secretary of State and send a copy of the report to each
2 candidate whose name or likeness is included in the activity without that
3 candidate's knowledge.

4 * * *

5 Sec. 17. REPEAL

6 17 V.S.A. § 2970 (campaign reports; other entities; public questions) is
7 repealed.

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

9 Sec. 18. AUDITS OF VOTER CHECKLISTS AND DISTRICT

10 BOUNDARIES

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

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

19 (c) On or before November 15, 2025, the Secretary shall submit a written
20 report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military

1 Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations with the findings
2 of the audits.

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

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

10 * * * Prohibiting Appointment of Interested Parties to a Recount
11 Committee * * *

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

13 § 2602a. APPOINTMENT OF RECOUNT COMMITTEE

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

18 (2)(A) If a list of nominees is not delivered to the county clerk within
19 two business days, the clerk shall notify the appropriate candidates that they
20 have 24 hours to submit lists of nominees for disinterested individuals to serve
21 on the recount committee.

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* * *

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

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

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

* * * 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.

1 Sec. 21. REPEAL

2 17 V.S.A. § 1973 (voting in more than one place) is repealed.

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

4 § 2103. DEFINITIONS

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

7 * * *

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

12 * * *

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

14 § 2358. EXAMINING PETITIONS; SUPPLEMENTARY PETITIONS

15 * * *

16 (b) If found not to conform, ~~he or she~~ the officer shall state in writing on a
17 particular petition why it cannot be accepted, and within ~~72 hours~~ two business
18 days from receipt, ~~he or she~~ the officer shall return it to the candidate in whose
19 behalf it was filed. In such case, supplementary petitions may be filed not later
20 than 10 days after the date for filing petitions. However, supplementary

1 petitions shall not be accepted if petitions with signatures of different persons
2 totaling at least the required number were not received by the filing deadline.

3 * * *

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

5 § 2313. FILING OF CERTIFICATE OF ORGANIZATION

6 * * *

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

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

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

16 § 2413. NOMINATION OF JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

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

20 * * *

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 in
16 writing why a particular petition cannot be accepted, and within ~~72 hours~~ two
17 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 for
11 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 not
21 include;

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 by
17 a petition signed by at least five percent of the voters of the municipality and
18 filed with the municipal clerk not less than 47 days before the day of the
19 meeting.

20 * * *

1 § 2651a. CONSTABLES; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL; ELIMINATION
2 OF OFFICE

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

6 * * *

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

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

17 * * *

1 § 2651d. COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES; APPOINTMENT;

2 REMOVAL

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

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

9 * * *

10 § 2651e. MUNICIPAL CLERK; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL

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

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

16 * * *

17 § 2651f. MUNICIPAL TREASURER; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL

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

1 mistake. When an error or omission of this nature has been ~~thus~~ corrected by
2 resolution, all business within the terms of the action of the qualified voters
3 shall be as valid as if the requirements had been initially complied with,
4 condition, however, that the original action ~~thereby~~ corrected by the legislative
5 body was in compliance with the legal exercise of its corporate powers.

6 * * *

7 * * * Local Elections; Australian Ballot System * * *

8 Sec. 32. 17 V.S.A. chapter 55, subchapter 3 is amended to read:

9 Subchapter 3. Local Elections Using the Australian Ballot System

10 § 2680. AUSTRALIAN BALLOT SYSTEM; GENERAL

11 * * *

12 (h) Hearing.

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

21 * * *

1 § 2681. NOMINATIONS; PETITIONS; CONSENTS

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

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

9 * * *

10 * * * Local Elections; Fire Districts; Voters * * *

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

12 § 2485. OFFICERS GENERALLY

13 ~~A~~ The voters of a fire district shall elect at its first meeting and at each
14 annual meeting thereafter a clerk, a treasurer, and a collector of taxes. ~~Such fire~~
15 ~~district~~ The voters may elect a chief engineer and ~~such~~ any assistant engineers
16 as are necessary, whether or not they are inhabitants of the district, who shall
17 rank in the order of their election. ~~Such~~ The officers shall hold office until the
18 next annual meeting and until others are elected. A vacancy in any office may
19 be filled by the prudential committee. ~~Such district at its~~ At the district's first
20 meeting, the voters shall elect a prudential committee that shall consist of three
21 persons, who shall serve for one, two, and three years, respectively. ~~Thereafter~~

1 ~~at~~ At each subsequent annual meeting, a member of ~~such~~ the prudential
2 committee shall be elected for the term of three years. If the fire district so
3 votes, two additional persons may be elected to ~~such~~ the committee for a term
4 of one year. A vacancy in ~~such~~ the committee may be filled at an annual
5 meeting, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, but the ~~selectboard~~
6 legislative body of the ~~town~~ municipality in which ~~such~~ the district is located
7 may fill a vacancy in ~~such~~ the committee until an election by the appointment
8 of a resident of ~~such~~ the district. When a meeting is not held on the second
9 Monday in January, the officers of the district may be elected at a special
10 meeting. The officers shall be elected by ballot if demanded by a voter and
11 confirmed by a majority vote.

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

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

14 Subchapter 6. Vacancies in Town Offices

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

16 (a) When a an elected municipal officer resigns the officer's office, has
17 been removed from the office, dies, becomes unable to perform the officer's
18 duties due to a mental condition or psychiatric disability, or removes from
19 ~~town~~ the municipality, the office shall become vacant. Notice of this vacancy
20 shall be posted by the legislative body in at least two public places in the

1 municipality, and in and near the municipal clerk's office, within 10 days of
2 after the creation of the vacancy.

3 * * *

4 § 962. SPECIAL MUNICIPAL MEETING

5 A ~~town~~ municipality at a special municipal meeting may fill a vacancy in a
6 ~~town~~ municipal office.

7 § 963. DUTIES OF SELECTBOARD; SPECIAL MEETING

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

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

18 (c) If there are no selectboard members in office, the Secretary of State
19 shall call a special election to fill any vacancies and for that interim shall
20 appoint and authorize the ~~town~~ municipal clerk or another qualified person to

1 draw orders for payment of continuing obligations and necessary expenses
2 until the vacancies are filled.

3 * * * Local Elections; Authority of Constables * * *

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

5 § 1529. FIRST CONSTABLE AS COLLECTOR

6 The first constable, if elected, shall be collector of State, county, town, and
7 town school district taxes when a collector of taxes is not appointed or elected
8 at the annual town meeting, and shall pay over the taxes collected agreeably to
9 the warrants for their collection.

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

11 § 1936a. CONSTABLES; POWERS AND QUALIFICATIONS

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

17 * * *

18 * * * Effective Date * * *

19 Sec. 37. EFFECTIVE DATE

20 This act shall take effect on passage.