

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Government Operations to which was referred House
3 Bill No. 474 entitled “An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election
4 law” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that
5 the Senate propose to the House that the bill be amended by striking out all
6 after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 * * * Ranked-Choice Voting Report * * *

8 Sec. 1. REPORT

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

14 * * * Failure of a Major Political Party to Nominate a Candidate by Primary

15 * * *

16 Sec. 2. [Deleted.]

17 Sec. 3. [Deleted.]

18 * * * One-Bite Candidacy * * *

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

20 § 2381. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER

21 * * *

1 (c) Military or overseas voters.

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

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

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

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

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

1 * * * Candidate Demographic Information * * *

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

3 § 2665. NOTIFICATION TO SECRETARY OF STATE

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

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

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

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

21 § 2370. WRITE-IN CANDIDATES

1 (a)(1) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under section
2 2587 of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the
3 primary election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State
4 office, or any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State’s
5 design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under
6 subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with
7 either all town clerks within the candidate’s applicable district or the Secretary
8 of State’s office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The
9 Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made
10 in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

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

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

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

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

1 candidate whose name is printed on the ballot, ~~he or she may~~ the write-in
2 candidate shall qualify as a primary winner.

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

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

8 (2) file a consent similar in form to the consent prescribed by sections
9 2361, 2385 and 2402 of this title with the Secretary of State.

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

11 § 2472. CONTENTS

12 * * *

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

17 * * *

18 (5)(A) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under
19 section 2587 of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday preceding
20 the election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or
21 any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State’s design
22 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 (b) as soon as practicable.

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

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

11 (ii) no candidate is printed on the ballot, or if a candidate
12 whose name is printed on the ballot dies or is otherwise disqualified prior to
13 7:00 p.m. on the election day.

14 * * *

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

16 § 2587. RULES FOR COUNTING VOTES

17 * * *

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

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

3 (A) count write-in votes:

4 (i) for candidates who have filed in compliance with section 2370,
5 2472, or 2702 of this title or who have filed a consent to the printing of the
6 candidate’s name on the ballot for a major political party, as provided in
7 section 2361, 2385, or 2402 of this title; or

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

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

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

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

20 (3) Notwithstanding any contrary provisions in subdivision (2)(A) of
21 this subsection, if the number of “other write-ins” for the same nomination or
22 office equals or exceeds the number of votes cast for any candidate for the

1 same nomination or office who appears to have been nominated or elected,
2 election officials shall record the name and vote totals on the tally sheet for all
3 candidates for that nomination or office. If this result occurs in a multiple-
4 municipality district, but one or more municipalities did not record the name
5 and vote totals for all candidates, the Secretary of State, on the day after the
6 election, shall order the town clerk to reconvene the board of civil authority.
7 In the presence of at least two other election officials who are not members of
8 the same political party, the clerk shall open the ballot containers, list all write-
9 ins for this nomination or office individually, and record write-in votes for all
10 candidates. The clerk shall then place the entire contents in containers, affix
11 new seals, and transmit the new seal numbers.

12 * * *

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

14 § 2702. NOMINATING PETITION

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

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

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

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

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

9 (f)(1) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under section
10 2587 of this title, not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the
11 election, a write-in candidate for nomination shall complete a form of the
12 Secretary of State’s design affirming that the candidate wants to have received
13 votes for that office in every major political party’s primary results listed under
14 subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with
15 either all town clerks within the candidate’s applicable district or the Secretary
16 of State’s office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The
17 Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made
18 in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

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

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

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

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

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

9 § 2921. CANDIDATES; REGISTRATION; CHECKING ACCOUNT;

10 TREASURER

11 (a)(1) Each candidate who ~~has made expenditures or accepted contributions~~
12 ~~of \$500.00 or more in an election cycle~~ files a consent to the printing of the
13 candidate’s name on the ballot, as provided in section 2361, 2370, 2385, or
14 2402 of this title, shall register with the Secretary of State within 10 days of
15 ~~reaching the \$500.00 threshold or on the date that the next report is required of~~
16 ~~the candidate under this chapter, whichever occurs first, prior to filing the~~
17 consent stating his or her the candidate’s full name and address; the office the
18 ~~candidate is seeking; the name and address of the bank in which the candidate~~
19 ~~maintains his or her campaign checking account; and the name and address of~~
20 the treasurer responsible for maintaining the checking account. A candidate’s
21 treasurer may be the candidate or his or her the candidate’s spouse.

1 § 2901. DEFINITIONS

2 As used in this chapter:

3 * * *

4 (10) “Independent expenditure-only political committee” means a political
5 committee that any one or more individuals, or any corporation, labor
6 organization, public interest group, or other entity, excluding a political party,
7 that accepts contributions of \$1,000.00 or more or makes expenditures of
8 \$1,000.00 or more within any two-year general election cycle for the purpose
9 of supporting or opposing candidates, influencing an election, or advocating
10 for or against a public question; conducts its activities entirely independent of
11 candidates; does not give contributions to candidates, political committees, or
12 political parties; does not make related expenditures; and is not closely related
13 to a political party or to a political committee that makes contributions to
14 candidates or makes related expenditures. “Independent expenditure-only
15 political committee” includes any “self-funded individual,” meaning an
16 individual who receives no contributions from any other source for the purpose
17 of supporting or opposing candidates, influencing an election, or advocating
18 for or against a public question.

19 * * *

20 (13) “Political committee” or “political action committee” means any
21 formal or informal committee of ~~two~~ one or more individuals or a corporation,
22 labor organization, public interest group, or other entity, not including a

1 political party, that accepts contributions of \$1,000.00 or more ~~and or~~ makes
2 expenditures of \$1,000.00 or more in any two-year general election cycle for
3 the purpose of supporting or opposing one or more candidates, influencing an
4 election, or advocating a position on a public question in any election, and
5 includes ~~an independent expenditure-only political committee and~~ a legislative
6 leadership political committee.

7 * * *

8 Sec. 16. 17 V.S.A. § 2922 is amended to read:

9 § 2922. POLITICAL COMMITTEES; INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE-
10 ONLY POLITICAL COMMITTEES; REGISTRATION;
11 CHECKING ACCOUNT; TREASURER

12 (a)(1) Each political committee or independent expenditure-only political
13 committee shall register with the Secretary of State within 10 days ~~of~~ after
14 making expenditures of \$1,000.00 or more and accepting contributions of
15 \$1,000.00 or more stating its full name and address; Committees that are not
16 self-funded individuals shall also state the name and address of the bank in
17 which it maintains its campaign checking account; and the name and address
18 of the treasurer responsible for maintaining the checking account.

19 * * *

20 (b) All expenditures by a political committee or an independent
21 expenditure-only political committee shall be paid by either a credit card or a
22 debit card, check, or other electronic transfer from the single campaign

1 checking account in the bank designated by the ~~political~~ committee under
2 subsection (a) of this section, or, if under \$250.00, the ~~political~~ committee may
3 make the expenditure from cash from that campaign checking account if
4 accompanied by a receipt, a copy of which shall be maintained by the ~~political~~
5 committee for at least two years from the end of the two-year general election
6 cycle in which the expenditure was made. A self-funded individual need not
7 utilize a campaign checking account, but shall otherwise comply with this
8 section. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the payment
9 of fees required to be made from a separately held online account designated
10 solely to collect campaign contributions made to the ~~political~~ committee.

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

18 Sec. 16a. 17 V.S.A. § 2925 is amended to read:

19 § 2925. POLITICAL COMMITTEES; INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE-
20 ONLY POLITICAL COMMITTEES; SURPLUS CAMPAIGN
21 FUNDS

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

4 * * *

5 Sec. 16b. 17 V.S.A. § 2945 is amended to read:

6 § 2945. ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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

16 Sec. 16c. 17 V.S.A. § 2962 is amended to read:

17 § 2962. REPORTS; GENERAL PROVISIONS

18 (a) Any report required to be submitted to the Secretary of State under this
19 chapter shall contain the statement “I hereby certify that the information
20 provided on all pages of this campaign finance disclosure report is true to the
21 best of my knowledge, information, and belief” and places for the signature of

1 the candidate or the treasurer of the candidate, political committee,
2 independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party.

3 * * *

4 Sec. 16d. 17 V.S.A. § 2965 is amended to read:

5 § 2965. FINAL REPORTS; CANDIDATES FOR STATE OFFICE, THE
6 GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND COUNTY OFFICE; POLITICAL
7 COMMITTEES; INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE-ONLY
8 POLITICAL COMMITTEES; POLITICAL PARTIES; END-OF-
9 CYCLE REPORTS FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEES AND
10 POLITICAL PARTIES

11 * * *

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

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

22 Sec. 16e. 17 V.S.A. § 2972 is amended to read:

1 § 2972. IDENTIFICATION IN ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATIONS

2 (a) An electioneering communication shall contain the name and mailing
3 address of the person, candidate, political committee, independent expenditure-
4 only political committee, or political party that paid for the communication.

5 The name and address shall appear prominently and in a manner such that a
6 reasonable person would clearly understand by whom the expenditure has been
7 made, except that:

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

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

16 * * *

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

1 electioneering communication was made to the date on which the expenditure
2 for the electioneering communication was made.

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

7 * * *

8 Sec. 16f. 17 V.S.A. § 2973 is amended to read:

9 § 2973. SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR RADIO,
10 TELEVISION, OR INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS

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

19 (b) If the person who paid for the communication is not an individual, the
20 audio statement required by this section shall include the name of that person
21 and the name and title of the treasurer in the case of a political committee,

1 independent expenditure-only political committee, or political party or the
2 principal officer in the case of any other person that is not an individual.

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

4 § 2970. CAMPAIGN REPORTS; ~~OTHER ENTITIES~~ POLITICAL ACTION

5 COMMITTEES; INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE-ONLY

6 POLITICAL COMMITTEES; PUBLIC QUESTIONS

7 (a) Any formal or informal political action committee ~~of two or more~~
8 individuals or a corporation, labor organization, public interest group, or other
9 entity, ~~not including a political party, or independent expenditure-only political~~
10 committee that makes expenditures of \$1,000.00 or more during the election
11 cycle for the purpose of advocating a position on a public question or
12 influencing an election in any election shall file a report of its expenditures 30
13 days before, 10 days before, and two weeks after the election with the
14 Secretary of State.

15 * * *

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

17 Sec. 18. AUDITS OF VOTER CHECKLISTS AND DISTRICT

18 BOUNDARIES

19 (a) On or before September 15, 2025, local boards of civil authority and
20 town clerks whose municipal boundaries are divided for the purpose of
21 Representative districts and Senatorial districts shall audit their voter checklists

1 to ensure that those checklists accurately correspond to the prescribed district
2 boundaries.

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

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

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

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

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

18 Committee * * *

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

20 § 2602a. APPOINTMENT OF RECOUNT COMMITTEE

21 (a)(1) Upon receipt of a petition, the county clerk shall notify all candidates
22 for the office that is the subject of the recount, advising them to each submit

1 immediately a list of a minimum of 10 nominees for disinterested individuals
2 to serve on a recount committee.

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

7 * * *

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

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

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

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

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

20 § 1971. CASTING MORE THAN ONE BALLOT

21 A legal voter who knowingly ~~casts more than one ballot at any one time of~~
22 balloting votes more than once in any election held in this State, or who votes

1 in both this State and another state or territory in the same or equivalent
2 election for the same office shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 if the
3 offense is committed at a primary or general election, and not more than
4 \$100.00 if committed at a local election.

5 Sec. 21. REPEAL

6 17 V.S.A. § 1973 (voting in more than one place) is repealed.

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

8 § 2103. DEFINITIONS

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

11 * * *

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

16 * * *

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

18 § 2358. EXAMINING PETITIONS; SUPPLEMENTARY PETITIONS

19 * * *

20 (b) If found not to conform, ~~he or she~~ the officer shall state in writing on a
21 particular petition why it cannot be accepted, and within ~~72 hours~~ two business
22 days from receipt, ~~he or she~~ the officer shall return it to the candidate in whose

1 behalf it was filed. In such case, supplementary petitions may be filed not later
2 than 10 days after the date for filing petitions. However, supplementary
3 petitions shall not be accepted if petitions with signatures of different persons
4 totaling at least the required number were not received by the filing deadline.

5 * * *

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

7 § 2313. FILING OF CERTIFICATE OF ORGANIZATION

8 * * *

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

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

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

18 § 2413. NOMINATION OF JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

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

22 * * *

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. § 2402 is amended to read:**

6 **§ 2402. REQUISITES OF STATEMENT**

7 * * *

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

10 * * *

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

14 * * *

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

16 **§ 2546. RECEIPT OF BALLOTS BY CLERK; VOTER STATUS;**
17 **OPPORTUNITY TO CURE; PROCESSING ABSENTEE**
18 **BALLOTS**

19 (a) Town clerk; process generally. Beginning ~~30~~ 45 days before the
20 opening of the polls on election day, upon receipt of a mailing envelope
21 containing ballots returned by a voter, the town clerk shall, within three

1 business days or on the next day the office is open for business, whichever is
2 later, direct two election officials working together to do all of the following:

3 * * *

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

5 § 2703. EXAMINING PETITIONS; SUPPLEMENTARY PETITIONS

6 The Secretary of State shall examine the petitions and ascertain whether
7 they conform to the provisions of this chapter, and sections 2353, 2354, and
8 2358 of this title. If found not to conform, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary shall state in
9 writing why a particular petition cannot be accepted, and within ~~72 hours~~ two
10 business days from receipt ~~he or she~~, the Secretary shall return it to the
11 candidate in whose behalf it was filed. In such case, supplementary petitions
12 may be filed not later than 10 days after the deadline for filing petitions.
13 However, supplementary petitions shall not be accepted if petitions with the
14 signatures of at least 1,000 persons were not filed by the deadline for filing
15 petitions set forth in section 2702 of this chapter.

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

17 Meetings * * *

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

19 § 310. DEFINITIONS

20 As used in this subchapter:

21 * * *

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

2 § 863. REGULATION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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

9 * * *

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

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

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

13 * * *

14 § 2640. ANNUAL MEETINGS

15 * * *

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

22 * * *

1 § 2645. CHARTERS; ADOPTION, REPEAL, OR AMENDMENT;
2 PROCEDURE

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

7 * * *

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

12 * * *

13 § 2651a. CONSTABLES; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL; ELIMINATION
14 OF OFFICE

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

18 * * *

19 (3) When a town votes to authorize the selectboard to appoint
20 constables, the selectboard's authority to make ~~such~~ the appointments shall
21 remain in effect until the town rescinds that authority by the majority vote of

1 the registered voters ~~present and voting~~ at an annual or special meeting duly
2 warned for that purpose.

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

8 * * *

9 § 2651d. COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES; APPOINTMENT;
10 REMOVAL

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

14 (2) A collector of delinquent taxes so appointed may be removed by the
15 legislative body for just cause after notice and hearing at will.

16 * * *

17 § 2651e. MUNICIPAL CLERK; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL

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

20 (2) A municipal clerk so appointed may be removed by the legislative
21 body for just cause after notice and hearing at will.

22 * * *

1 § 2651f. MUNICIPAL TREASURER; APPOINTMENT; REMOVAL

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

4 (2) A treasurer so appointed may be removed by the legislative body for
5 just cause after notice and hearing at will.

6 * * *

7 § 2662. VALIDATION OF MUNICIPAL MEETINGS

8 When any of the requirements as to notice or warning of an annual or
9 special municipal meeting have been omitted or not complied with, the
10 omission or noncompliance, if the meeting and the business transacted at it is
11 otherwise legal and within the scope of the municipal powers, may be
12 corrected and legalized by vote at a regular meeting or special meeting of the
13 municipality called and duly warned for that purpose. The question to be
14 voted upon shall substantially be, “Shall the action taken at the meeting of this
15 town (or city, village or district) held on (state date) in spite of the fact that
16 (state the error or omission), and any act or action of the municipal officers or
17 agents pursuant thereto be readopted, ratified, and confirmed.” Errors or
18 omissions in the conduct of an original meeting that are not the result of an
19 unlawful notice or warning or noncompliance within the scope of the warning,
20 including technical errors within the content of a ballot, may be cured by a
21 resolution of the legislative body of the municipality by a vote of two-thirds of
22 all its members at a regular meeting or a special meeting called for that

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

7 * * *

8 * * * Local Elections; Australian Ballot System * * *

9 **Sec. 32. 17 V.S.A. § 2680 is amended to read:**

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

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

3 § 2485. OFFICERS GENERALLY

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

1 meeting. The officers shall be elected by ballot if demanded by a voter and
2 confirmed by a majority vote.

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

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

5 Subchapter 6. Vacancies in Town Offices

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

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

14 * * *

15 § 962. SPECIAL MUNICIPAL MEETING

16 A ~~town~~ municipality at a special municipal meeting may fill a vacancy in a
17 ~~town~~ municipal office.

18 § 963. DUTIES OF SELECTBOARD; SPECIAL MEETING

19 (a) When a vacancy occurs in any town office, the selectboard forthwith by
20 appointment in writing shall fill ~~such~~ the vacancy until an election is had;
21 except that in the event of vacancies in a majority of the selectboard at the
22 same time, ~~such~~ the vacancies shall be filled by a special ~~town~~ municipal

1 meeting called for that purpose. Notwithstanding the provisions of this
2 subsection, the selectboard shall not be required to fill a vacancy that occurs
3 within 90 days before the date of the municipality’s annual meeting.

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

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

12 * * * Local Elections; Authority of Constables * * *

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

14 § 1529. FIRST CONSTABLE AS COLLECTOR

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

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

20 § 1936a. CONSTABLES; POWERS AND QUALIFICATIONS

21 (a) A town may vote at a special or annual town meeting to prohibit
22 constables from exercising any law enforcement authority. A vote to prohibit

1 constables from exercising any law enforcement authority shall remain in
2 effect until rescinded by the majority vote of the registered voters at an annual
3 or special meeting duly warned for that purpose.

4 * * *

5 * * * Automatic Voter Registration * * *

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

7 § 2145a. REGISTRATIONS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR

8 VEHICLES

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

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

18 (A) The applicant's citizenship.

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

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

21 (D) The applicant's E-911 street address or a description of the
22 physical location of the applicant's residence. The description must contain

1 sufficient information so that the town clerk can determine whether the
2 applicant is a resident of the town.

3 (E) The voter's oath.

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

6 * * *

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

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

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

19 * * *

20 * * * Listing of Candidate Names on Ballots * * *

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

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

7 (A) A nickname of one or two words by which the candidate has
8 been commonly known for at least three years preceding the election may be
9 used in combination with a candidate's name. A nickname that constitutes a
10 slogan or otherwise indicates a political, economic, social, or religious view or
11 affiliation may not be used.

12 (B) A nickname ~~may~~ shall not be used unless the candidate executes
13 and files with the application for a place on the ballot an affidavit indicating
14 that the nickname complies with this subsection.

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

17 (4) A candidate's name shall appear the same as it does on the
18 candidate's campaign finance registration with the Secretary of State filed in
19 accordance with section 2921 of this title.

20 (c)(1) ~~The consent~~ A candidate shall be filed file a consent on or before the
21 day petitions are due.

