

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Government Operations to which was referred Senate
3 Bill No. 298 entitled “An act relating to creating the Vermont Voting Rights
4 Act” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that
5 the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in
6 lieu thereof the following:

7 * * * Vermont Voting Rights Act * * *

8 Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

9 This act may be cited as the “Vermont Voting Rights Act of 2026.”

10 Sec. 2. 17 V.S.A. chapter 59 is added to read:

11 CHAPTER 59. VERMONT VOTING RIGHTS ACT

12 Subchapter 1. Rights of Voters

13 § 2801. DEFINITIONS

14 As used in this chapter:

15 (1) “Municipality” means a town, city, village, school district, or other
16 political subdivision that holds public elections.

17 (2) “Protected class” means a group of citizens protected from
18 discrimination based on race or color or membership in a language minority
19 group.

1 § 2802. VOTE DENIAL OR DILUTION

2 (a) No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or
3 procedure shall be imposed or applied by the State or any municipality in a
4 manner that results in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the
5 United States to vote based on race or color or membership in a language
6 minority group.

7 (b) A violation of subsection (a) of this section is established if, on the
8 basis of the totality of circumstances, it is shown that the political processes
9 leading to nomination or election in the State or a municipality are not equally
10 open to participation by members of a protected class in that its members have
11 less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the
12 political processes or to elect representatives of their choice. The extent to
13 which members of a protected class have been elected to office in the State or
14 municipality is one circumstance that may be considered.

15 (c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to establish a right to have
16 members of a protected class elected in numbers equal to their proportion in
17 the population.

18 § 2803. IMPAIRMENT OF VOTING RIGHTS OF REGISTERED VOTERS

19 Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to deny, impair, or otherwise
20 adversely affect the right to vote of any registered voter.

1 order, or other order, against such person. The action shall be initiated in the
2 Civil Division of the Superior Court in the county in which the alleged
3 violation has occurred. A court may, in its discretion, allow a private plaintiff
4 a reasonable attorney’s fee as part of the costs, if the plaintiff is the prevailing
5 party.

6 (d) This section applies to any election and to any method used by a
7 political party for selection of its nominees and for selection of delegates to its
8 conventions and meetings.

9 § 2024. COMMUNICATION OF FALSE INFORMATION TO

10 ELIGIBLE VOTERS

11 (a) A person shall not intentionally communicate to a registered voter false
12 information, knowing the information to be false, for the purpose of impeding
13 the voter in exercising the voter’s right to vote. The provisions of this section
14 shall apply to information only about the date, time, or place of the election;
15 how to register to vote; or a voter’s registration status.

16 (b) Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (a) of this section
17 shall be imprisoned not more than six months or fined not more than
18 \$1,000.00, or both. A violation may be prosecuted in the Superior Court in
19 either the county in which the alleged communication was made or in the
20 county in which the communication was received, if different.

1 and the Commissioner shall ensure that the security is extended without
2 interruption.

3 (d) The Commissioner shall ensure that, in the provision of this security,
4 the officer is protected at the officer’s place of work, any other location the
5 officer is conducting official business, the officer’s home, and, if requested,
6 protected during transit between any of these locations.

7 * * * Effective Date * * *

8 Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

9 This act shall take effect on passage.

10 (Committee vote: _____)

11 _____

12 Senator _____

13 FOR THE COMMITTEE