S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

6818

I N S E N A T E

February 25, 2016

Introduced by Sen. AVELLA -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Elections

AN ACT to amend the election law, in relation to ensuring certain notification requirements are cost-effective and efficient

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Subdivision 1 of section 4-117 of the election law, as amended by chapter 288 of the laws of 2009, is amended to read as follows:

1. The board of elections, between August first and August fifth of each year, shall send by [first class] mail on which is endorsed ["ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED"] SUCH LANGUAGE DESIGNATED BY THE STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS TO ENSURE POSTAL AUTHORITIES DO NOT FORWARD SUCH MAIL BUT RETURN IT TO THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS WITH FORWARDING INFORMATION, WHEN IT CANNOT BE DELIVERED AS ADDRESSED and which contains a request that any such mail received for persons not residing at the address be dropped back in the mail, a communication, in a form approved by the state board of elections, to every registered voter who has been registered without a change of address since the beginning of such year, except that the board of elections shall not be required to send such communications to voters in inactive status. The communication shall notify the voter of the days and hours of the ensuing primary and general elections, the place where he appears by his registration records to be entitled to vote, the fact that voters who have moved or will have moved from the address where they were last registered must re-register or, that if such move was to another address in the same county or city, that such voter may either notify the board of elections of his new address or vote by paper ballot at the polling place for his new address even if such voter has not re-registered, or otherwise notified the board of elections of the change of address. If the location of the polling place for the voter's election district has been moved, the communication shall contain the following legend in bold type: "YOUR POLLING PLACE HAS BEEN CHANGED. YOU NOW VOTE AT.....". The communication shall also indicate whether the polling place is accessible to

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [ ] is old law to be omitted.

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physically disabled voters, that a voter who will be out of the city or county on the day of the primary or general election or a voter who is ill or physically disabled may obtain an absentee ballot, that a physically disabled voter whose polling place is not accessible may request that his registration record be moved to an election district which has a polling place which is accessible, the phone number to call for applications to move a registration record or for absentee ballot applications, the phone number to call for the location of registration and polling places, the phone number to call to indicate that the voter is willing to serve on election day as an election inspector, poll clerk, interpreter or in other capacities, the phone number to call to obtain an application for registration by mail, and such other information concerning the elections or registration as the board may include. In lieu of sending such communication to every registered voter, the board of elections may send a single communication to a household containing more than one registered voter, provided that the names of all such voters appear as part of the address on such communication.

S 2. Subdivision 9 of section 5-210 of the election law, as amended by chapter 179 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

9. The county board of elections shall, promptly and in any event, not later than twenty-one days after receipt by it of the application, verify the identity of the applicant. In order to do so, the county board of elections shall utilize the information provided in the application and shall attempt to verify such information with the information provided by the department of motor vehicles, social security administration and any other lawful available information source. If the county board of elections is unable to verify the identity of the applicant within twenty-one days of the receipt of the application, it shall immediately take steps to confirm that the information provided by the applicant was accurately utilized by such county board of elections, was accurately verified with other information sources and that no data entry error, or other similar type of error, occurred. Following completion of the preceding steps, the county board of elections shall mail (a) a notice of its approval, (b) a notice of its approval which includes an indication that such board has not yet been able to verify the identity of the applicant and a request for more information so that such verification may be completed, or (c) a notice of its rejection of the application to the applicant in a form approved by the state board of elections. Notices of approval, notices of approval with requests for more information or notices of rejection shall be sent by nonforwardable first class or return postage guaranteed mail on which is endorsed ["ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED"] SUCH LANGUAGE DESIGNATED BY THE STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS TO ENSURE POSTAL AUTHORITIES DO NOT FORWARD SUCH MAIL BUT RETURN IT TO THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS WITH FORWARDING INFORMATION, WHEN IT CANNOT BE DELIVERED AS ADDRESSED and which contains a request that any such mail received for persons not residing at the address be dropped back in the mail. The voter's registration and enrollment shall be complete upon receipt of the application by the appropriate county board of elections. The failure of a county board of elections to verify an applicant's identity shall not be the basis for the rejection of a voter's application, provided, however, that such verification failure shall be the basis for requiring county board of elections to take the additional verification steps provided by this chapter. The notice shall also advise the registrant of the date when his registration and enrollment is effective, of the date and the hours of the next regularly scheduled primary or general election in which he will be eligible to vote,

of the location of the polling place of the election district in which he is or will be a qualified voter, whether such polling place is accessible to physically handicapped voters, an indication that physically handicapped voters or voters who are ill or voters who will be out of the city or county on the day of the primary or general election, may obtain an absentee ballot and the phone number to call for absentee ballot applications, the phone numbers to call for location of polling places, to obtain registration forms and the phone number to call to indicate that the voter is willing to serve on election day as an inspector, poll clerk or interpreter. The notice of approval, notice of approval with request for more information or notice of rejection shall also advise the applicant to notify the board of elections if there is any inaccuracy. The form of such mail notification shall be prescribed by the state board of elections and shall contain such other information and instructions as it may reasonably require to carry out the purposes of this section. The request for more information shall inform the voter that "THE FAILURE TO CONTACT THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND CORRECT ANY INACCURACIES IN THE APPLICATION OR PROVIDE REQUESTED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN A REQUEST FOR IDENTIFICATION AT THE POLLS IN ORDER TO CAST A VOTE ON A VOTING MACHINE." If such notice is returned undelivered without a new address, the board shall forthwith send such applicant a confirmation notice pursuant to the provisions of section 5-712 of this article and place such applicant in inactive status. The state board of elections shall prepare uniform notices by this section as provided for in subdivision eight of section 3-102 of this chapter.

S 3. This act shall take effect immediately.