

STATE OF NEW YORK

5527

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

April 6, 2017

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 notifying voters of the candidates and upcoming elections

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Article 8 of the election law is amended by adding a new title 6 to read as follows:

TITLE VI

VOTER NOTIFICATIONS

Section 8-600. Voting guide.

8-602. Postcards.

8-604. Television and radio.

§ 8-600. Voting guide. 1. Any candidate seeking nomination or election at the next general and primary election to any public office, or a designated agent acting on behalf of such candidate, may, at least six weeks prior to the general and primary election, file with the board of elections with which nominating and designating petitions and certificates for such office are filed pursuant to section 6-144 of this chapter a sworn statement containing biographical information, such as the candidate's occupation, educational and occupational background, prior governmental experience, and any other personal background or experience that the candidate deems relevant to the election campaign, and answers to issue based questions drafted by the state board of elections that are specified to each position.

2. The state board of elections shall, by regulation, establish the format and length of the statement authorized under this section and shall provide to candidates a standardized form for preparing such statement.

3. Within five days after the last day for filing statements under this section, all local boards of elections shall forward all such

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

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1 candidate biographies to the state board of elections in electronic form
2 in a manner to be prescribed by the state board of elections.

3 4. In the event that any candidate biographies received by the state
4 board of elections, from any local board of elections, is not in elec-
5 tronic form, the state board of elections shall, within ten days after
6 receipt of such candidate biography, convert such candidate biography to
7 electronic form.

8 5. The state board of elections shall mail and email, if a registered
9 voter's email is available to the state board of elections, to every
10 registered voter in each household in the state a voting guide consist-
11 ing of all biographical information and answers to issue based ques-
12 tions, as outlined in subdivision one of this section, received from
13 each candidate for whom the receiver of this mailing can vote for in the
14 upcoming election. In the event the state board of elections determines
15 that distribution of the voting guide would be more efficient and
16 economical if done by the local boards of elections, the state board is
17 hereby authorized to instruct all boards of elections to distribute the
18 voting guide to at least one registered voter in each household. Should
19 the state board so instruct the boards of elections, it shall provide a
20 sufficient number of voting guides to each board of elections and shall
21 promptly reimburse each board for the actual cost of postage incurred by
22 said board in distributing the voting guides provided that said board
23 utilize the lowest feasible postage rate charged by the United States
24 postal service. The distribution of the voting guides to registered
25 voters or households shall be made at least three weeks before the
26 election to which they pertain.

27 6. The state board of elections shall maintain a website where all
28 voter guide information is maintained, updated and accessible to the
29 general public.

30 § 8-602. Postcards. For each primary and general election, the state
31 board of elections shall mail and email, if a registered voter's email
32 is available to the state board of elections, to at least one registered
33 voter in each household a postcard which contains information for the
34 upcoming election that contains the date of the election. The board
35 shall send the postcards twice before the election with the first mail-
36 ing to be made no earlier than fifteen days and no later than ten days
37 prior to the election; and with the second mailing to be made no earlier
38 than seven days and no later than five days before the election.

39 § 8-604. Television and radio. For ten consecutive days before each
40 primary and general election, all major television and radio stations
41 using public airwaves or doing business within the state shall inform
42 their audience at least four times each day between the hours of seven
43 a.m. and eleven p.m. of the upcoming election. Each of the four required
44 notifications shall air at least three hours apart.

45 § 2. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
46 it shall have become a law.