STATE OF NEW YORK

281

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by Sens. MYRIE, SERRANO -- 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 7 to read as follows:

TITLE VII
VOTER NOTIFICATIONS

Section 8-700. Voting guide.
8-702. Postcards.
8-704. Television and radio.

§ 8-700. 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.

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

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3. Within five days after the last day for filing statements under this section, all local boards of elections shall forward all such candidate biographies to the state board of elections in electronic form in a manner to be prescribed by the state board of elections.

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

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

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

§ 8-702. Postcards. For each primary and general election, the state board of elections shall mail and email, if a registered voter's email is available to the state board of elections, to at least one registered voter in each household a postcard which contains information for the upcoming election that contains the date of the election. The board shall send the postcards twice before the election with the first mailing to be made no earlier than fifteen days and no later than ten days prior to the election; and with the second mailing to be made no earlier than seven days and no later than five days before the election.

§ 8-704. Television and radio. For ten consecutive days before each primary and general election, all major television and radio stations using public airwaves or doing business within the state shall inform their audience at least four times each day between the hours of seven a.m. and eleven p.m. of the upcoming election. Each of the four required notifications shall air at least three hours apart.

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