

STATE OF NEW YORK

6132--A

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

April 3, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. CARROLL, THIELE -- read once and referred to the Committee on Election Law -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the election law, in relation to registration of voters during early voting

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

1 Section 1. Subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (e) of subdivision 3 of
2 section 8-302 of the election law, as amended by chapter 113 of the laws
3 of 2023, is amended to read as follows:

4 (ii) They may swear to and subscribe an affidavit stating that they
5 have duly registered to vote, the address in such election district from
6 which they registered, that they remain a duly qualified voter in such
7 election district, that their registration poll record appears to be
8 lost or misplaced or that their name and/or their signature was omitted
9 from the computer generated registration list or such record indicates
10 the voter already voted when they did not do so or that they have moved
11 within New York state since they last registered, the address from which
12 they were previously registered and the address at which they currently
13 reside, and at a primary election, the party in which they are enrolled,

14 or that such voter is eligible to vote pursuant to section 8-604 of this
15 article.

16 The inspectors of election shall offer such an affidavit to
17 each such voter whose residence address is in such election district.
18 Each such affidavit shall be in a form prescribed by the state board of
19 elections, shall be printed on an envelope of the size and quality used
20 for an absentee ballot envelope, and shall contain an acknowledgment
21 that the affiant understands that any false statement made therein is
22 perjury punishable according to law. Such form prescribed by the state
23 board of elections shall request information required to register such
24 voter should the county board determine that such voter is not yet
registered and shall constitute an application to register to vote. The

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

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1 voter's name and the entries required shall then be entered without
2 delay and without further inquiry in the fourth section of the challenge
3 report or in the place provided in the computer generated registration
4 list, with the notation that the voter has executed the affidavit
5 hereinabove prescribed, or, if such person's name appears in such regis-
6 tration list, the board of elections may provide a place to make such
7 entry next to their name in such list. The voter shall then, without
8 further inquiry, be permitted to vote an affidavit ballot provided for
9 by this chapter. Such ballot shall thereupon be placed in the envelope
10 containing their affidavit, and the envelope sealed and returned to the
11 board of elections in the manner provided by this chapter for protested
12 official ballots, including a statement of the number of such ballots.
13 If a voter registration application for a voter who casts an affidavit
14 ballot pursuant to this subparagraph was received by a board of
15 elections by the tenth day prior to the election, the board shall cast
16 and count an affidavit ballot from such voter, if otherwise valid,
17 notwithstanding the fact that the voter's name was omitted from a regis-
18 tration poll record or list of registered voters.

19 § 2. The election law is amended by adding a new section 8-604 to read
20 as follows:

21 § 8-604. Registration during early voting. 1. In addition to other
22 methods of voter registration provided under this chapter, a person who
23 is not registered to vote in the state but is otherwise qualified to
24 register to vote and to cast a ballot may register to vote and enroll in
25 a political party at an early voting polling location, provided such
26 registration is in accordance with the voter registration deadline set
27 forth in subdivision three of section 5-210 of this chapter.

28 2. A qualified person who is not registered to vote in the state who
29 appears at an early voting polling place shall be offered the opportu-
30 nity to register to vote and enroll in a political party and shall be
31 given an affidavit ballot, provided such registration is in accordance
32 with the voter registration deadline set forth in subdivision three of
33 section 5-210 of this chapter.

34 3. If such registration is deemed effective, the board of elections
35 shall add the person's voter registration information to the statewide
36 electronic voter file and include the corresponding affidavit ballot in
37 the official canvass, if otherwise valid.

38 4. The board of elections shall conduct the receipt and handling of
39 each voter registration and corresponding ballot in a manner that
40 protects the secrecy of the ballot and allows the elections official to
41 process the registration and include the corresponding ballot in the
42 official canvass, if otherwise valid.

43 5. The board of elections shall advise a person completing such voter
44 registration of the procedures for determining the validity of such
45 voter registration.

46 6. The state board of elections shall promulgate rules and regulations
47 to implement this section.

48 § 3. The opening paragraph of section 9-209 of the election law, as
49 added by chapter 763 of the laws of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

50 Before completing the canvass of votes cast in any primary, general,
51 special, or other election at which voters are required to sign their
52 registration poll records before voting, the board of elections shall
53 proceed in the manner hereinafter prescribed to review, cast and canvass
54 any absentee, military, special presidential, special federal or other
55 special ballots and any ballots cast in affidavit envelopes, including
56 ballots cast by voters pursuant to section 8-604 of this chapter. Each

1 such ballot shall be retained in the original envelope containing the
2 voter's affidavit and signature, in which it is delivered to the board
3 of elections until such time as it is to be reviewed, in order to be
4 cast and canvassed.

5 § 4. Subdivision 7 of section 9-209 of the election law, as added by
6 chapter 763 of the laws of 2021, paragraph (d) as amended by chapter 661
7 of the laws of 2022, and paragraph (h) as amended by chapter 113 of the
8 laws of 2023, is amended to read as follows:

9 7. Post-election review and canvassing of affidavit ballots. (a) With-
10 in four business days of the election, the board of elections shall
11 review all affidavit ballots cast in the election. If the central board
12 of canvassers determines that a person was entitled to vote at such
13 election it shall cast and canvass such affidavit ballot; provided,
14 however, if the board of elections receives one or more timely absentee
15 ballots from a voter who also cast an affidavit ballot at a poll site,
16 the last such timely absentee ballot received shall be canvassed and the
17 affidavit ballot shall be set aside unopened; and provided further, if a
18 voter was issued an absentee ballot and votes in person via an affidavit
19 ballot and the board does not receive such absentee ballot, the affida-
20 vit ballot shall be canvassed if the voter is otherwise qualified to
21 vote in such election.

22 (b) Affidavit ballots are valid when cast at a polling site permitted
23 by law by qualified voters: (i) who moved within the state after regis-
24 tering; (ii) who are in inactive status; (iii) whose registration was
25 incorrectly transferred to another address even though they did not
26 move; (iv) whose registration poll records were missing on the day of
27 such election; (v) who have not had their identity previously verified;
28 (vi) whose registration poll records did not show them to be enrolled in
29 the party in which they are enrolled; ~~[and]~~ (vii) who are incorrectly
30 identified as having already voted; and (viii) who have registered to
31 vote pursuant to section 8-604 of this chapter.

32 (c) Affidavit ballots are valid to the extent that ministerial error
33 by the board of elections or any of its employees caused such ballot
34 envelope not to be valid on its face.

35 (d) If the central board of canvassers determines that a person was
36 entitled to vote at such election, the board shall cast and canvass such
37 affidavit ballot if such board finds that the voter appeared at a poll-
38 ing place, in the correct county, which is designated as a polling place
39 for the correct assembly district, regardless of the fact that the voter
40 may have appeared in the incorrect election district or polling place,
41 and regardless of whether the voter's name was in the registration poll
42 record; provided, however, that in the event such ballot includes one or
43 more offices for which such person is not entitled to vote at such
44 election, such ballot shall only be cast and canvassed for the offices
45 for which such person is entitled to vote at such election.

46 (e) If the central board of canvassers finds that a voter submitted a
47 voter registration application through the electronic voter registration
48 transmittal system pursuant to title eight of article five of this chap-
49 ter and signed the affidavit ballot, the board shall cast and canvass
50 such affidavit ballot if the voter is otherwise qualified to vote in
51 such election.

52 (f) If the central board of canvassers determines that a person was
53 entitled to vote at such election, the board shall cast and canvass such
54 affidavit ballot if such board finds that the voter substantially
55 complied with the requirements of this chapter. For purposes of this
56 paragraph, "substantially complied" shall mean the board can determine

1 the voter's eligibility based on the statement of the affiant or records
2 of the board.

3 (g) If the central board of canvassers finds that the statewide voter
4 registration list supplies sufficient information to identify a voter,
5 failure by the voter to include on the affidavit ballot envelope the
6 address where such voter was previously registered shall not be a fatal
7 defect and the board shall cast and canvass such affidavit ballot.

8 (h) (i) If a voter registration application for a person was received
9 by a board of elections by the tenth day prior to the election, an affi-
10 davit ballot from the person shall be cast and counted if the voter is
11 otherwise qualified to vote in such election, notwithstanding the fact
12 that the person's name was omitted from a registration poll record or
13 list of registered voters.

14 (ii) If the central board of canvassers finds that the voter regis-
15 tered or pre-registered to vote for the first time pursuant to title
16 nine of article five of this chapter at least ten days before a primary,
17 appeared at such primary election, and indicated on the affidavit ballot
18 envelope the intent to enroll in such party, the affidavit ballot shall
19 be cast and canvassed if the voter is otherwise qualified to vote in
20 such election.

21 (i) A voter registration submitted by a person registering to vote at
22 an early voting polling location pursuant to section 8-604 of this chap-
23 ter shall be processed and an affidavit ballot from such person shall be
24 cast and canvassed if the voter is otherwise qualified to vote in such
25 election, notwithstanding the fact that the person's name is not on a
26 registration poll record or list of registered voters.

27 (j) When the central board of canvassers determines that an affidavit
28 ballot is invalid due to a missing signature on the affidavit ballot
29 envelope, or because the signature on the affidavit ballot envelope does
30 not correspond to the registration signature, such ballots shall be
31 subject to the cure procedure in subdivision three of this section. The
32 absence of a signature on a registration poll record or computer gener-
33 ated list of registered voters shall not provide a basis for rejecting
34 affidavit ballots submitted pursuant to section 8-604 of this chapter.

35 ~~[(j)]~~ (k) At the meeting required pursuant to paragraph (a) of subdi-
36 vision eight of this section, each candidate, political party, and inde-
37 pendent body shall be entitled to object to the board of elections'
38 determination that an affidavit ballot is invalid. Such ballots shall
39 not be counted absent an order of the court. In no event may a court
40 order a ballot that has been counted to be uncounted.

41 ~~[(k)]~~ (l) The board of elections shall enter information into the
42 ballot tracking system, as defined in section 8-414 of this chapter, to
43 allow a voter who cast a ballot in an affidavit envelope to determine if
44 the vote was counted.

45 § 5. This act shall take effect immediately.