General Assembly

Raised Bill No. 459

February Session, 2026

LCO No. **2656**

Referred to Committee on GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

Introduced by:
(GAE)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CIRCULATION OF PRIMARY AND NOMINATING PETITIONS AND DISTRIBUTION OF ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATIONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 9-404b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(d) Each circulator of a primary petition page shall be an enrolled party member of a municipality in this state. Each petition page shall contain a statement signed by the registrar of the municipality in which the circulator is an enrolled party member attesting that the circulator is an enrolled party member in the municipality. Unless such a statement by the registrar of voters appears on each page so submitted, the Secretary shall reject the page. Each separate page of the petition shall contain a statement as to the authenticity of the signatures on the page and the number of such signatures, and shall be signed under the penalties of false statement by the person who circulated the page,

setting forth the circulator's address and the town in which the circulator is an enrolled party member and attesting that each person whose name appears on the page signed the petition in person in the presence of the circulator, that the circulator either knows each such signer or that the signer satisfactorily identified himself or herself to the circulator and that the spaces for candidates supported, offices sought and the political party involved were filled in prior to the obtaining of the signatures. Each separate page of the petition shall also be acknowledged before an appropriate person as provided in section 1-29. The Secretary shall reject any page of a petition filed with the Secretary which does not contain such a statement by the circulator as to the authenticity of the signatures on the page, or upon which the statement of the circulator is incomplete in any respect, or which does not contain the certification required under this section by the registrar of the town in which the circulator is an enrolled party member. <u>No person who has been convicted of a crime under this title shall circulate any page of a primary petition during such person's period of probation or parole, and for a period of twelve years after such person's release from confinement, probation or parole, and the Secretary shall reject for filing any such page that was circulated in violation of such prohibition. For the purpose of complying with such rejection requirement, the Secretary shall order the performance of a nation-wide criminal background check on each circulator of one or more primary petition pages.</u> Any individual proposed as a candidate in any primary petition may serve as a circulator of the pages of the petition, provided the individual's service as circulator does not violate any provision of this section.

Sec. 2. Subsection (c) of section 9-410 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(c) Each circulator of a primary petition page shall be an enrolled party member of a municipality in this state who is entitled to vote. Each petition page shall contain a statement signed by the registrar of the

municipality in which such circulator is an enrolled party member attesting that the circulator is an enrolled party member in such municipality. Unless such a statement by the registrar appears on each page so submitted, the registrar shall reject such page. No candidate for the nomination of a party for a municipal office or the position of town committee member shall circulate any petition for another candidate or another group of candidates contained in one primary petition for the nomination of such party for the same office or position, and any petition page circulated in violation of this provision shall be rejected by the registrar. No person shall circulate petitions for more than the maximum number of candidates to be nominated by a party for the same office or position, and any petition page circulated in violation of this provision shall be rejected by the registrar. Each separate sheet of such petition shall contain a statement as to the authenticity of the signatures thereon and the number of such signatures, and shall be signed under the penalties of false statement by the person who circulated the same, setting forth such circulator's address and the town in which such circulator is an enrolled party member and attesting that each person whose name appears on such sheet signed the same in person in the presence of such circulator, that the circulator either knows each such signer or that the signer satisfactorily identified the signer to the circulator and that the spaces for candidates supported, offices or positions sought and the political party involved were filled in prior to the obtaining of the signatures. Each separate sheet of such petition shall also be acknowledged before an appropriate person as provided in section 1-29. Any sheet of a petition filed with the registrar which does not contain such a statement by the circulator as to the authenticity of the signatures thereon, or upon which the statement of the circulator is incomplete in any respect, or which does not contain the certification hereinbefore required by the registrar of the town in which the circulator is an enrolled party member, shall be rejected by the registrar. <u>No person who has been convicted of a crime under this title shall circulate any page of a primary petition during such person's period of probation or parole, and for a period of twelve years after such person's</u>

release from confinement, probation or parole, and the registrar shall reject for filing any such page that was circulated in violation of such prohibition. For the purpose of complying with such rejection requirement, the registrar shall order the performance of a nation-wide criminal background check on each circulator of one or more primary petition pages. Any individual proposed as a candidate in any primary petition may serve as a circulator of the pages of such petition, provided such individual's service as circulator does not violate any provision of this section.

Sec. 3. Section 9-453e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Each circulator of a nominating petition page shall be a United States citizen, at least eighteen years of age and a resident of a town in this state and shall not be on parole for conviction of a felony. Any individual proposed as a candidate in any nominating petition may serve as circulator of the pages of such nominating petition.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, no person who has been convicted of a crime under this title shall circulate any page of a nominating petition during such person's period of probation or parole, and for a period of twelve years after such person's release from confinement, probation or parole. The appropriate town clerk or the Secretary of the State, as applicable under section 9-453i, shall reject for filing any such page that was circulated in violation of such prohibition. For the purpose of complying with such rejection requirement, the appropriate town clerk or the Secretary, as applicable, shall order the performance of a nation-wide criminal background check on each circulator of one or more nominating petition pages.

Sec. 4. Section 9-453j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Each page of a nominating petition submitted to the town clerk or the Secretary of the State and filed with the Secretary of the State under the

provisions of sections 9-453a to 9-453s, inclusive, or section 9-216 shall contain a statement as to the residency in this state and eligibility of the circulator and authenticity of the signatures thereon, signed under penalties of false statement, by the person who circulated the same. Such statement shall set forth (1) such circulator's residence address, including the town in this state in which such circulator is a resident, (2) the circulator's date of birth and that the circulator is at least eighteen years of age, (3) that the circulator is a United States citizen and **[**not**]** neither (A) on parole for conviction of a felony, nor (B) on probation or parole for conviction of a crime under this title or within twelve years of release from confinement, probation or parole due to such a conviction under this subparagraph, and (4) that each person whose name appears on such page signed the same in person in the presence of such circulator and that either the circulator knows each such signer or that the signer satisfactorily identified himself to the circulator. Any false statement committed with respect to such statement shall be deemed to have been committed in the town in which the petition was circulated.

Sec. 5. Subsection (k) of section 9-140 of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(k) (1) (A) A person shall register with the municipal clerk before distributing five or more absentee ballot applications for an election, primary or referendum, not including applications distributed to such person's immediate family. Such requirement shall not apply to a person who is the designee of an applicant or to any employee of the Department of Correction who provides the application for absentee ballot form prescribed under subsection (c) of section 9-139a to incarcerated absentee ballot applicants.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, no person who has been convicted of a crime under this title shall distribute any absentee ballot application during such person's period of probation or parole, and for a period of twelve years after such

144 person's release from confinement, probation or parole. The municipal
145 clerk shall reject for filing any absentee ballot application that was
146 distributed in violation of such prohibition. For the purpose of
147 complying with such rejection requirement, the municipal clerk shall
148 order the performance of a nation-wide criminal background check on
149 each distributor of one or more absentee ballot applications.

150 (2) The municipal clerk shall reject the application of any absentee
151 ballot applicant made upon the form prescribed under subsection (c) of
152 section 9-139a if such form indicates any address other than an address
153 at a Department of Correction facility. The municipal clerk shall
154 maintain a log of all applications of incarcerated absentee ballot
155 applicants received by such municipal clerk, which log shall indicate the
156 name and address of each applicant, the date of receipt of each
157 application and the date such municipal clerk mailed the absentee ballot
158 to such applicant or the reason why such application was rejected.

159 (3) Any person who distributes absentee ballot applications shall
160 maintain a list of the names and addresses of prospective absentee ballot
161 applicants who receive such applications, and shall file such list with
162 the municipal clerk prior to the date of the primary, election or
163 referendum for which the applications were so distributed, except that
164 such requirements shall not apply to any employee of the Department
165 of Correction who provides the application for absentee ballot form
166 prescribed under subsection (c) of section 9-139a to incarcerated
167 absentee ballot applicants. Any person who distributes absentee ballot
168 applications and receives an executed application shall forthwith file the
169 application with the municipal clerk.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*from passage*	9-404b(d)
Sec. 2	*from passage*	9-410(c)
Sec. 3	*from passage*	9-453e
Sec. 4	*from passage*	9-453j

Sec. 5	*from passage*	9-140(k)

Statement of Purpose:

To prohibit for a period of time certain individuals convicted of crimes under title 9 of the general statutes from circulating primary and nominating petitions and distributing absentee ballot applications.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]