
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 459

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

SUMMARY

This bill prohibits people from (1) circulating certain election petitions for a specified period if they have been convicted of an election crime and (2) requesting or distributing absentee ballot applications for others, with certain exceptions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 1-4 — PETITION PROHIBITION

The petition prohibition lasts (1) while the person is on probation or parole and (2) for 12 years after a person's release from confinement, probation, or parole. The secretary of the state, registrar of voters, or town clerk, as applicable, must (1) order a nationwide criminal background check on each circulator and (2) reject any petition page filed by an ineligible person under these provisions.

An ineligible person may not circulate (1) nominating petitions on behalf of petitioning candidates seeking congressional, statewide, legislative, or municipal office, or the office of presidential elector, at a regular or special election or (2) primary petitions on behalf of major party candidates for congressional, statewide, legislative, or municipal office. For nominating petitions, the bill adds a related stipulation to the statement that the circulator must sign on each petition page.

§ 5 — ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION PROHIBITION

The bill generally prohibits any person from requesting or distributing absentee ballot applications for others unless (1) acting as a voter's designee (see BACKGROUND); (2) by a Department of

Correction employee on an incarcerated voter's behalf as allowed by law; or (3) requesting less than five applications for use by the person's immediate family (spouse, child, parent, or sibling, or any dependent relative residing in the person's home).

Additionally, current law prohibits a person from paying or receiving compensation solely to distribute absentee ballot applications. The bill instead prohibits paying or receiving compensation solely to obtain applications (1) by designees or (2) on behalf of a person's immediate family.

Correspondingly, the bill eliminates provisions generally requiring individuals to (1) register with the town clerk if distributing five or more applications for a specific election contest and (2) keep a log of who received applications they distributed and file it with the town clerk.

Similarly, the bill also prohibits candidates, parties, and political committees (and agents of candidates or committees) from mailing unsolicited absentee ballot applications to any person. Under current law, they may do so if they include a written (1) explanation of the eligibility requirements and (2) warning concerning the penalties for violating these requirements.

BACKGROUND

Voters' Designees

By law, a designee must be (1) a person caring for the applicant because of the applicant's illness or physical disability (for example, a licensed physician or a registered or practical nurse); (2) the applicant's family member; or (3) a police officer, registrar of voters, or deputy or assistant registrar of voters in the municipality where the applicant resides (CGS § 9-140b).

Related Bills

sHB 5001, reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee, generally amends the state's absentee balloting laws, including changes concerning absentee ballot distribution by third parties.

sSB 491, reported favorably the GAE committee, contains substantially similar absentee balloting provisions as sHB 5001.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/23/2026)