ASSEMBLY, No. 4564

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

SYNOPSIS
   Establishes "Voting Precinct Transparency Act;" requires filing of election district, county district, and municipal ward boundary data with Secretary of State for posting and download on official website with matching election results data.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
   As introduced.

1   AN ACT concerning the availability of election district, county
2   district, municipal ward boundary, and election results data to
3   the public, amending various parts of the statutory law, and
4   supplementing chapter 4 of Title 19 of the Revised Statutes.
5
6   BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
7   *of New Jersey:*
8
9   1. (New section) a. This act shall be known and may be cited
10   as the "Voting Precinct Transparency Act."
11   b. The Secretary of State shall make available on the official
12   website of the Division of Elections in the Department of State the
13   election district, county district, and municipal ward boundaries
14   required to be filed with the Secretary of State pursuant to section 7
15   of P.L.1976, c.83 (C.19:4-16), section 121 of P.L.1972, c.154
16   (C.40:41A-121), and section 7 of P.L.1981, c.496 (C.40:44-15),
17   respectively. The boundary files shall be in ESRI Shapefile format
18   and available for download by the public free of charge.
19   c. Within 90 days following the certification of the results of
20   any special, primary, school, municipal, or general election, and of
21   any public question voted by the voters at an election, pursuant to
22   Title 19 of the Revised Statutes, the Secretary of State shall also
23   make available on the official website as provided under subsection
24   b. of this section a table or database containing the election results
25   compiled at the election districts level. The election results table or
26   database shall be in a single file, in a comma-delimited values
27   format, and shall contain a unique identifier field for each election
28   district that matches the unique identifier field for that district in the
29   election districts Shapefile. The election results table or database
30   shall be available for download by the public free of charge.
31   d. The Secretary of State, in consultation with the New Jersey
32   Office of Information Technology, Office of Geographic
33   Information Systems, shall issue technical guidelines governing the
34   preparation, maintenance, and submission of boundary files and
35   election results files deemed necessary or desirable to accomplish
36   the provisions of this section.
37
38   2. Section 7 of P.L.1976, c.83 (C.19:4-16) is amended to read
39   as follows:
40   7. a. The county board shall cause to have prepared and shall
41   maintain an up-to-date suitable map of the county and of each
42   constituent municipality clearly delineating the geographical
43   boundaries of each election district contained therein and of the
44   ward, legislative, freeholder, Congressional or other district or part
45   thereof, in which each election district is contained. A word

1 description of such geographical boundaries shall be attached to
2 each such map.
3   The county board shall file copies of such maps and descriptions
4 in the following manner: three copies to the Secretary of State, one
5 copy to the county clerk, and one copy to the clerk of each affected
6 municipality. Within 30 days of any changes in the boundaries of
7 any of the aforementioned districts, the county board shall file
8 revised maps and accompanying revised descriptions in the same
9 manner.
10   Said maps and descriptions shall be public records and shall be
11 available for inspection by the public in the offices of the Secretary
12 of State, county clerks and municipal clerks during normal office
13 hours. Copies shall be made available to the public for a fee
14 necessary to cover the cost of reproduction.
15   In order to effectuate the purposes of this act, the Secretary of
16 State shall establish such rules and regulations governing the
17 preparation, maintenance, distribution and filing of said maps and
18 descriptions as he deems necessary or desirable.
19   b. In addition to the maps and descriptions required to be filed
20 with the Secretary of State under subsection a. of this section, the
21 county board shall file with the Secretary of State the election
22 district boundaries in ESRI Shapefile format in accordance with
23 section 1 of P.L.   , c.   (C.   ) (pending before the Legislature as this
24 bill).
25 (cf: P.L.1976, c.83, s.7)
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27   3.   Section 121 of P.L.1972, c.154 (C.40:41A-121) is amended
28 to read as follows:
29   121. a. Within 30 days after the adoption of one of said optional
30 plans, the district commissioners shall make and file their report
31 and certificate over at least three of their signatures setting forth
32 and properly describing the district boundaries fixed and
33 determined, to which there shall be annexed a map of the county
34 with the district boundaries clearly marked thereon.
35   The report so certified shall be filed in the office of the clerk of
36 the county, and a copy thereof shall also be filed with the Secretary
37 of State.
38   b. In addition to the description of the district boundaries and
39 map required to be filed with the Secretary of State under
40 subsection a. of this section, the district commissioners shall file
41 with the Secretary of State the district boundaries in ESRI Shapefile
42 format in accordance with section 1 of P.L.   , c.   (C.   ) (pending
43 before the Legislature as this bill).
44 (cf: P.L.1972, c.154, s.121)
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46   4.   Section 7 of P.L.1981, c.496 (C.40:44-15) is amended to
47 read as follows:

1 7. a. Within 30 days following their initial meeting pursuant to
2 section 5 of this act, the ward commissioners shall file their report,
3 certified by at least   three of their signatures, setting forth and
4 properly describing the ward boundaries fixed and determined.
5 There shall be annexed to the report a map of the municipality with
6 the ward boundaries clearly marked thereon.
7   The report so certified shall be filed in the office of the county
8 clerk, and copies shall be filed with the Secretary of State and in the
9 office of the municipal clerk.
10   b. In addition to the description of the ward boundaries and map
11 required to be filed with the Secretary of State under subsection a.
12 of this section, the ward commissioners shall file with the Secretary
13 of State the ward boundaries in ESRI Shapefile format in
14 accordance with section 1 of P.L.   , c.   (C.   ) (pending before the
15 Legislature as this bill).
16 (cf: P.L.1981, c.496, s.7)
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18   5.   This act shall take effect immediately.
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21   STATEMENT
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23   This act, to be known as the "Voting Precinct Transparency
24 Act," requires the filing of election district, county district, and
25 municipal ward boundary data with the Secretary of State for
26 posting and download online. The bill also requires the secretary to
27 post as a single file a table or database containing the election
28 results at the election districts level, in a manner that matches the
29 election districts boundary data.
30   Under current law, all municipalities in New Jersey are divided
31 into election districts for election administration and voting
32 purposes. For counties and municipalities that have adopted an
33 optional charter as a form of government, current law also provides
34 that those counties and municipalities may choose in their charter to
35 be divided into county districts or municipal wards for the purpose
36 of electing members of the governing body to represent those
37 districts or wards. Currently, Essex, Atlantic, and Hudson counties
38 are divided into county districts from which voters elect some or all
39 of the members of the county governing body. Of the State's 565
40 municipalities, about 64 have chosen to establish municipal wards
41 from which voters elect some or all of the members of the
42 municipal governing body.
43   This bill requires each districting authority (county board of
44 elections for election districts, district commissioners for county
45 districts, and ward commissioners for municipal wards) to file with
46 the Secretary of State the election district, county district, and
47 municipal ward boundary data, as appropriate, in ESRI Shapefile
48 format. This file format is widely used with geographic information

1 systems software. The Secretary of State is directed to make this
2 boundary data available on the official website of the Division of
3 Elections for download by the public free of charge. The bill also
4 requires the secretary, within 90 days following the certification of
5 the results of any election, or public question voted on by the
6 voters, to make available on the same website a table or database
7 containing the election results compiled at the election districts
8 level. The election results table or database would be in a single
9 file, in a comma-delimited values format, and would contain a
10 unique identifier field for each election district that matches the
11 unique identifier field for that district in the election districts
12 Shapefile. The election results table or database would also be
13 available for download by the public free of charge.
14   The bill directs the Secretary of State, in consultation with the
15 New Jersey Office of Information Technology, Office of
16 Geographic Information Systems, to issue technical guidelines
17 governing the preparation, maintenance, and submission of
18 boundary files and election results files deemed necessary or
19 desirable to accomplish the provisions of the bill.