

SENATE STATE GOVERNMENT, WAGERING, TOURISM &
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, Nos. 481 and 651

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 26, 2018

The Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee reports favorably a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 481 and 651.

Under current law, each applicant for a driver's license or renewal of an existing license is offered an opportunity to simultaneously register to vote. This substitute requires the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) to automatically register to vote a person who is eligible to vote, or to automatically update a person's voter registration, as part of the process of applying for a driver's license, an examination permit, a probationary driver's license, or a non-driver identification card, unless the applicant specifically declines the automatic voter registration.

The Chief Administrator of the MVC will collect and promptly transmit the personal information required to register to vote to the Secretary of State in an electronic format. For applications received through the mail for renewal of a motor vehicle driver's license or non-driver identification card, the Chief Administrator is to ensure that the necessary information is collected from those applications and transmitted electronically to the Secretary of State within 10 days of receipt, until the Chief Administrator determines, through promulgation of rule or regulation, that prompt electronic transmission is practicable.

The following notices will be printed on every application for a driver's license or non-driver identification card and every related update, renewal, or change of address:

(1) a notice that the applicant will be registered to vote, if eligible, unless the applicant specifically declines the automatic voter registration;

(2) a notice of the voter eligibility requirements and the penalties for false registration and illegal voting under State law; and

(3) a notice that an applicant who is a victim of domestic violence or stalking may decline the automatic voter registration and register to vote without disclosing the applicant's street address.

Change of address notifications submitted to the Chief Administrator will be promptly reported to the Secretary of State. A

change of address notification in paper format is to be reported to the Secretary of State within 10 days, and the Secretary of State will use the notification to automatically update an existing voter registration, unless the applicant declines.

The substitute provides that if a person who is not entitled to vote becomes registered to vote pursuant to the bill, that person's registration will be presumed to have been effected with official authorization, and the person will not be deemed to have committed a crime under N.J.S.A.19:34-1 for false registration. However, this presumption does not apply to a person who knowingly and willfully makes a false statement to effectuate voter registration.

The Secretary of State, with the assistance of the Chief Administrator, is to take appropriate measures to educate the public about voter registration under the bill.