

SENATE, No. 587

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Senator NILSA CRUZ-PEREZ

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Turner, Gill, Ruiz, Greenstein and Weinberg

SYNOPSIS

“New Voter Empowerment Act”; permits 17 year olds to vote in primary election if they turn 18 years old before next succeeding general election.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning eligibility to vote in a primary election for the
2 general election and designated as the “New Voter
3 Empowerment Act,” amending R.S.19:31-5, and supplementing
4 chapter 23 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:*

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9 1. (New section) Notwithstanding the provisions of
10 R.S.19:4-1, or any other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, any
11 registered voter who is 17 years of age prior to the date on which a
12 primary election for the general election is held shall be permitted
13 to vote in that primary election if the registered voter attains 18
14 years of age on or before the day of the next succeeding general
15 election.

16

17 2. R.S.19:31-5 is amended to read as follows:

18 19:31-5. Each person, who is at least 17 years of age at the time
19 he or she applies for registration, who resides in the district in
20 which he or she expects to vote, who will be of the age of 18 years
21 or more on or before the first election in which he or she expects to
22 vote, who is a citizen of the United States, and who, if he or she
23 continues to reside in the district until that election, will at the time
24 have fulfilled all the requirements as to length of residence to
25 qualify him or her as a legal voter, shall, unless otherwise
26 disqualified, be entitled to be registered in such district. Each 17-
27 year-old registrant shall be designated in the Statewide voter
28 registration system as temporarily ineligible to vote until the
29 registrant's 18th birthday except as provided pursuant to section 1
30 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

31 Whenever an individual registers by mail after January 1, 2003
32 to vote for the first time in his or her current county of residence,
33 that individual shall provide either the individual's New Jersey
34 driver's license number or the last four digits of the individual's
35 Social Security Number, or shall submit with the voter registration
36 form a copy of: (1) a current and valid photo identification card; (2)
37 a current utility bill, bank statement, government check or pay
38 check; (3) any other government document that shows the
39 individual's name and current address; or (4) any other identifying
40 document that the Attorney General has determined to be
41 acceptable for this purpose. If the individual does not provide his
42 or her New Jersey driver's license number or Social Security
43 Number information or submit a copy of any one of these
44 documents, either at the time of registration or at any time
45 thereafter prior to attempting to vote, the individual shall be asked
46 for identification when voting for the first time starting at the first

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 election held after January 1, 2004 at which candidates are seeking
2 federal office or thereafter. This requirement shall not apply to any
3 individual entitled to vote by absentee ballot under the "Uniformed
4 and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act" (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-1 et
5 seq.) or to any individual who is provided the right to vote other
6 than in person under section 3 of Pub.L.98-435, the "Voting
7 Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act," or any other
8 voter entitled to vote otherwise than in person under any other
9 federal law. This requirement shall also not apply to any individual
10 who registers to vote by appearing in person at any voter
11 registration agency or to any individual whose voter registration
12 form is delivered to the county commissioner of registration or to
13 the Attorney General, as the case may be, through a third party by
14 means other than by mail delivery.

15 Once registered, the registrant shall not be required to register
16 again in such district as long as he or she resides therein, except
17 when required to do so by the commissioner, because of the loss of
18 or some defect in his or her registration record.

19 The registrant, when registered as provided in this Title, shall be
20 eligible to vote at any election to be held subsequent to such
21 registration, if he or she shall be a citizen of the United States of the
22 age of 18 years , except as provided pursuant to section 1 of
23 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), and
24 shall have been a resident of the State for at least 30 days and of the
25 county at least 30 days, when the same is held, subject to any
26 change in his qualifications which may later disqualify him. No
27 registrant shall lose the right to vote, and no registrant's name shall
28 be removed from the registry list of the county in which the person
29 is registered, solely on grounds of the person's failure to vote in one
30 or more elections
31 (cf: P.L.2015, c.222, s.1)

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33 3 This act shall take effect on January 1st next following the
34 date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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39 This bill, designated as the "New Voter Empowerment Act,"
40 permits any registered voter who is 17 years of age prior to the date
41 on which a primary election for the general election is held to vote
42 in that primary election if the registered voter attains 18 years of
43 age on or before the day of the next succeeding general election.
44 The bill creates an exemption in a provision of current law that
45 requires 17-year-old registrants in the Statewide voter registration
46 system to be marked as temporarily ineligible to vote until the
47 registrant's 18th birthday, in order to allow 17-year-old registrants
48 to vote in the primary election if they will be 18 on or before the
49 general election day.