Sponsored by:
Senator JAMES BEACH
District 6 (Burlington and Camden)
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District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS
Provides county clerks with additional week to mail ballots for 2020 primary election.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
AN ACT concerning the delivery of mail-in ballots for the 2020 primary election.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Notwithstanding section 9 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-9), starting on or before the 45th day before the day the 2020 primary election is held, each county clerk shall forward mail-in ballots by first-class postage, hand delivery, or electronically to each uniformed and overseas mail-voter, as defined by the federal “Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act” (52 U.S.C. s.20310 et seq.), whose request therefor has been approved. Any additional mail-in ballots that have been approved before the 45th day before the election shall be forwarded or delivered at least 38 days before the day of the election. Hand delivery of a mail-in ballot shall be made by the county clerk or the clerk's designee only to the voter, or the voter's authorized messenger, who must appear in person. No person shall serve as an authorized messenger for more than three qualified voters in an election. Ballots that have not been hand delivered shall be addressed to the voter at the forwarding address given in the application.

2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire on the date of the 2020 primary election.

STATEMENT

This bill seeks to address concerns over sufficient time to prepare the significant number of mail-in ballots expected for the 2020 primary election. Under current law, thousands of ballots will be required to be mailed by April 18, 2020, which gives county clerks less than four days to prepare and deliver mail-in ballots. This bill would provide county clerks with an additional week to proof, print, prepare, and mail ballots following the ballot draw date.

Under the bill, any additional mail-in ballots that have been approved before the 45th day before the 2020 primary election are required to be forwarded or delivered at least 38 days, instead of 45 days, before the day of the election. Under the bill, county clerks are still required to comply with federal guidelines and have military and overseas ballots mailed by April 18, 2020. The additional week provided under the bill is temporary and will only apply to the 2020 primary election.