

ASSEMBLY, No. 5166

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 16, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblyman ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Giblin

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Voting Improvement Task Force.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/4/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing the “Voting Improvement Task Force.”

2

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

5

6 1. a. There is established in, but not of, the Department of State
7 a task force to be known as the “Voting Improvement Task Force.”
8 The task force shall be independent of any supervision or control by
9 the department except as expressly authorized under this act.

10 b. The task force shall consist of nine members:

11 (1) the Secretary of State, ex officio, or the secretary’s designee;

12 (2) five county election officials to be appointed, one each, by the
13 Governor, Senate President, Senate Minority Leader, Speaker of the
14 General Assembly, and the Assembly Minority Leader with no two
15 appointees coming from the same county; and

16 (3) three members of the public with experience in vote-by-mail
17 processing or election reform advocacy to be appointed, one each, by
18 the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the General
19 Assembly.

20 c. The members of the task force shall be appointed and shall
21 hold their initial organizational meeting within 45 days after the
22 effective date of this act. At the initial organizational meeting, the
23 members shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among
24 the members of the task force by a majority vote. The task force may
25 appoint a secretary, who need not be a member of the task force.

26 d. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation
27 but shall be reimbursed, except for the Secretary of the State, for
28 necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of
29 their duties within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made
30 available to the task force for its purposes.

31 e. Any vacancy in the membership of the task force shall be
32 filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was
33 made.

34 f. It shall be the duty of the task force to:

35 (1) evaluate the vote-by-mail process in the State;

36 (2) examine ways to process and count vote-by-mail and
37 provisional ballots more quickly in the State;

38 (3) explore the feasibility of implementing ranked-choice voting
39 in the State; and

40 (4) research additional methods of expanding and improving
41 voting by mail in the State.

42 The task force shall hold at least three public hearings, one each
43 in the Northern, Central, and Southern parts of the State, to receive
44 testimony from the public and elections experts on matters
45 concerning voting by mail.

46 g. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
47 avail itself of the services of the officials and employees of the State
48 and its political subdivisions and their departments, boards, bureaus,

1 commissions, and agencies as it may require and as may be available
2 to it for the purposes of the task force. The Division of Elections in
3 the Department of State shall provide staff support services to the
4 task force.

5 h. The task force shall report its findings, conclusions, and
6 recommendations to the Governor and pursuant to section 2 of
7 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature no later than one
8 year following the first meeting of the task force. The task force shall
9 expire upon the submission of its report, pursuant to this section.

10
11 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire after
12 the task force submits its findings and recommendations to the
13 Governor and the Legislature.

14 15 16 STATEMENT

17
18 This bill establishes in, but not of, the Department of State a task
19 force to be known as the "Voting Improvement Task Force."

20 The task force would consist of nine members:

21 (1) the Secretary of State, ex officio, or the secretary's designee;

22 (2) five county election officials to be appointed, one each, by the
23 Governor, Senate President, Senate Minority Leader, Speaker of the
24 General Assembly, and the Assembly Minority Leader with no two
25 appointees coming from the same county; and

26 (3) three members of the public with experience in vote-by-mail
27 processing or election reform advocacy to be appointed, one each, by
28 the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the General
29 Assembly.

30 The bill directs the task force to:

31 (1) evaluate the vote-by-mail process in the State;

32 (2) examine ways to process and count vote-by-mail and
33 provisional ballots more quickly in the State;

34 (3) explore the feasibility of implementing ranked-choice voting
35 in the State; and

36 (4) research additional methods of expanding and improving
37 voting by mail in the State.

38 The task force is required to hold at least three public hearings,
39 one each in the Northern, Central, and Southern parts of the State, to
40 receive testimony from the public and elections experts on matters
41 concerning voting by mail.

42 The bill directs the task force to report its findings, conclusions,
43 and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later
44 than one year following its first meeting. The task force would expire
45 upon the submission of its report.