# [First Reprint] **SENATE, No. 1235**

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

### 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 3, 2022

**Sponsored by:** 

Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)
Senator ANDREW ZWICKER
District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

**Co-Sponsored by: Senator Turner** 

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Requires outer envelope for mailing of voted mail-in ballot by voter to include postage prepaid.

#### **CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism & Historic Preservation Committee on February 2, 2023, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/2/2023)

**AN ACT** concerning the mailing of voted mail-in ballots and amending various parts of the statutory law and supplementing P.L.2009, c.79.

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

- 1. Section 11 of P.L.1964, c.134 (C.19:58-11) is amended to read as follows:
- 11. Each county clerk shall cause to be printed a sufficient number of Presidential ballots for each Presidential election to be held in this State and along with all such ballots there shall also be furnished by the county clerk inner and outer envelopes which shall be of different color than those used to enclose military service and civilian absentee ballots, and also printed directions for the preparation and transmitting of such ballots and all expenses of printing and mailing such ballots shall be paid in the same manner as other expenses of such election are paid. The outer envelopes shall have affixed thereon the proper and sufficient first-class or airmail prepaid postage, the costs of which shall be paid by the county clerk and reimbursed by the State pursuant to section 8 of P.L., c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

23 (cf: P.L.1964, c.134, s.11)

- 25 2. Section 22 of P.L.1964, c.134 (C.19:58-22) is amended to 26 read as follows:
  - 22. Said sealed <u>postage prepaid</u> outer envelope with the inner envelope and the ballot enclosed therein, shall then be mailed [with sufficient postage] to the county board of elections to which it is addressed, or shall be presented in person to the county board of elections at the office of said board.

32 (cf: P.L.1964, c.134, s.22)

- <sup>1</sup>**[**3. Section 8 of P.L.1976, c.23 (C.19:59-8) is amended to read as follows:
  - 8. a. Each county clerk shall send by air mail, with each ballot for an overseas voter or overseas federal election voter transmitted by such means, appropriate printed instructions for its completion and return, together with an inner <u>envelope</u> and <u>an</u> outer envelope <u>with proper and sufficient postage thereon</u> similar to that required as to civilian vote by mail ballots with a legend on the inner envelope stating "Ballot for Overseas Voter" or "Ballot for Overseas Federal Election Voter," as appropriate.

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

- b. Each county clerk shall send to each overseas voter or overseas federal election voter requesting that a ballot be sent to that voter by electronic means all appropriate printed instructions for its completion and return. The printed instructions sent to each such voter shall include a certificate substantially the same as provided for in section 9 of P.L.1976, c.23 (C.19:59-9).
  - c. The printed instructions sent with each ballot to an overseas voter or overseas federal election voter, including instructions sent by electronic means, shall include a copy of the following notice:

#### PENALTY FOR FRAUDULENT VOTING

Any person who knowingly violates any of the provisions of the Overseas Residents Absentee Voting Law, or who, not being entitled to vote thereunder, fraudulently votes or attempts to vote thereunder or enables or attempts to enable another person, not entitled to vote thereunder, to vote fraudulently thereunder or who prevents or attempts to prevent by fraud the voting of any person legally entitled to vote under this act, shall be guilty of an indictable offense, and upon conviction thereof shall be subject, in addition to such other penalties as are authorized by law, to disenfranchisement while serving a sentence of incarceration unless and until pardoned or restored by law to the right of suffrage.

(cf: P.L.2019, c.270, s.9)]<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[4.Section 10 of P.L.1976, c.23 (C.19:59-10) is amended to read as follows:

10. a. For ballots sent to overseas voters or overseas federal election voters, other than such ballots sent to the voter by electronic means, the procedure for completing the ballot shall be as follows:

Upon completion of the ballot by indicating the voter's choice of candidates for the offices named or the voter's choice regarding a public question, or both, the ballot shall be placed in the inner envelope and sealed. Upon completion and signing in the voter's handwriting the certificate attached to the inner envelope, the inner envelope shall be placed in the outer envelope, which when sealed shall be mailed, postage prepaid by the county clerk, to the county board of elections whose address is printed thereon.

b. For ballots sent to overseas voters or overseas federal election voters by electronic means, the procedure for completing the ballot shall be as follows:

After the ballot is received and completed by the voter by indicating that person's choice of candidates for the offices named or that person's choice regarding a public question, or both, the ballot shall be placed in a secure envelope. Upon completion and signing in the voter's handwriting of the certificate sent to the voter pursuant to section 8 of P.L.1976, c.23 (C.19:59-8), it shall be placed in the same envelope as the voted ballot. The envelope shall

then be sealed securely and sent immediately by air mail to the appropriate county board of elections in this State.

- c. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections a. and b. of this section, a copy of an overseas voter's or overseas federal election voter's ballot may be transmitted by electronic means to the appropriate county board of elections in this State. Such a ballot shall be subject to the provisions of sections 3 and 4 of P.L.1995, c.195 (C.19:59-14 and C.19:59-15).
- (cf: P.L.2017, c.39, s.6)**]**<sup>1</sup>

- <sup>1</sup>[5. Section 2 of P.L.2005, c.148 (C.19:62-2) is amended to read as follows:
- 2. If an election by mail is authorized pursuant to section 1 of this act, P.L.2005, c.148 (C.19:62-1), the county clerk shall:
- a. publish, in advance of the election and pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated by the Secretary of State, official notice that the election shall be conducted by mail together with such other information regarding the conduct of the election as shall be deemed necessary by the Secretary of State;
- b. mail a ballot, including an outer envelope with proper and sufficient postage prepaid thereon and an inner envelope substantially similar to the envelopes provided for mail-in ballots pursuant to sections 12 and 13 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-12 and C.19:63-13), not sooner than the 20th day prior to the day of the election nor later than the 14th day prior to the day of the election, to each person registered to vote in the municipality at that election;
- c. designate the county clerk's office or the municipal clerk's office as the places to obtain a replacement ballot pursuant to section 5 of P.L.2005, c.148 (C.19:62-5);
- d. designate, after consultation with the county board of elections and pursuant to criteria established by the Secretary of State, places within the county or municipality that shall be available for the deposit of voted ballots for the election;
- e. make a provisional ballot available at the office of the county clerk and the office of the municipal clerk so that each person who has been a resident of the county or municipality in which the person seeks to register and vote at least 21 days prior to the day of the election and has moved to a location within the municipality after that 21st day and prior to the day of the election may vote;
- f. suspend distribution to each registered voter in the municipality of samples of the official ballot of any election, but distribute to each registered voter in the municipality with each ballot a copy of the voter information notice provided for in section 1 of P.L.2005, c.149 (C.19:12-7.1) as modified and supplemented by the Secretary of State as deemed appropriate for use in municipalities conducting elections by mail, and such instruction

about the completion of the ballot as deemed necessary by the Secretary of State;

- g. make certain that all qualified voters in the municipality requesting a mail-in ballot between the 45th day and the 21st day prior to the day of an election receive such ballot after the 20th day prior to the day of an election and voters requesting a ballot on or before the seventh day prior to the date of the election shall receive a ballot authorized pursuant to this section; and
- h. establish, after consultation with the county board of elections and in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of State, the time by which all ballots must be received by the board on the day of an election to be considered valid and counted.

(cf: P.L.2011, c.37, s.29) $\mathbf{I}^1$ 

- <sup>1</sup>3. Section 8 of P.L.1976, c.23 (C.19:59-8) is amended to read as follows:
- 8. a. Each county clerk shall send by air mail, with each ballot for an overseas voter or overseas federal election voter or overseas State and federal election voter transmitted by such means, appropriate printed instructions for its completion and return, together with an inner envelope and an outer envelope with proper and sufficient postage thereon similar to that required as to civilian vote by mail ballots with a legend on the inner envelope stating "Ballot for Overseas Voter," "Ballot for Overseas Federal Election Voter," or "Ballot for Overseas State and Federal Election Voter," as appropriate.
  - b. Each county clerk shall send to each overseas voter or overseas federal election voter or overseas State and federal election voter requesting that a ballot be sent to that voter by electronic means all appropriate printed instructions for its completion and return. The printed instructions sent to each such voter shall include a certificate substantially the same as provided for in section 9 of P.L.1976, c.23 (C.19:59-9).
  - c. The printed instructions sent with each ballot to an overseas voter or overseas federal election voter or overseas State and federal election voter, including instructions sent by electronic means, shall include a copy of the following notice:

#### PENALTY FOR FRAUDULENT VOTING

Any person who knowingly violates any of the provisions of the Overseas Residents Absentee Voting Law, or who, not being entitled to vote thereunder, fraudulently votes or attempts to vote thereunder or enables or attempts to enable another person, not entitled to vote thereunder, to vote fraudulently thereunder or who prevents or attempts to prevent by fraud the voting of any person legally entitled to vote under this act, shall be guilty of an indictable offense, and upon conviction thereof shall be subject, in addition to such other penalties as are authorized by law, to disenfranchisement

1 while serving a sentence of incarceration unless and until pardoned 2 or restored by law to the right of suffrage.<sup>1</sup>

3 (cf: P.L.2022, c.72, s.7)

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- <sup>1</sup>4. Section 10 of P.L.1976, c.23 (C.19:59-10) is amended to read as follows:
- 10. a. For ballots sent to overseas voters or overseas federal election voters or overseas State and federal election voters, other than such ballots sent to the voter by electronic means, the procedure for completing the ballot shall be as follows:

Upon completion of the ballot by indicating the voter's choice of candidates for the offices named or the voter's choice regarding a public question, or both, the ballot shall be placed in the inner envelope and sealed. Upon completion and signing in the voter's handwriting the certificate attached to the inner envelope, the inner envelope shall be placed in the outer envelope, which when sealed shall be mailed postage prepaid by the county clerk, to the county board of elections whose address is printed thereon.

b. For ballots sent to overseas voters or overseas federal election voters or overseas State and federal election voters by

electronic means, the procedure for completing the ballot shall be as 22 follows:

After the ballot is received and completed by the voter by indicating that person's choice of candidates for the offices named or that person's choice regarding a public question, or both, the ballot shall be placed in a secure envelope. Upon completion and signing in the voter's handwriting of the certificate sent to the voter pursuant to section 8 of P.L.1976, c.23 (C.19:59-8), it shall be placed in the same envelope as the voted ballot. The envelope shall then be sealed securely and sent immediately by air mail to the appropriate county board of elections in this State.

- c. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections a. and b. of this section, a copy of an overseas voter's or overseas federal election voter's or overseas State and federal election voter's ballot may be transmitted by electronic means to the appropriate county board of elections in this State. Such a ballot shall be subject to the provisions of sections 3 and 4 of P.L.1995, c.195 (C.19:59-14 and
- C.19:59-15).<sup>1</sup> 38

39 (cf: P.L.2022, c.72, s.10)

- 41 <sup>1</sup>5. Section 2 of P.L.2005, c.148 (C.19:62-2) is amended to read 42 as follows:
- 43 2. If an election by mail is authorized pursuant to section 1 of 44 this act, P.L.2005, c.148 (C.19:62-1), the county clerk shall:
- 45 a. publish, in advance of the election and pursuant to rules and 46 regulations promulgated by the Secretary of State, official notice 47 that the election shall be conducted by mail together with such other

information regarding the conduct of the election as shall be deemed necessary by the Secretary of State;

- b. mail a ballot, including an outer envelope with proper and sufficient postage prepaid thereon and an inner envelope substantially similar to the envelopes provided for mail-in ballots pursuant to sections 12 and 13 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-12 and C.19:63-13), not sooner than the 20th day prior to the day of the election nor later than the 14th day prior to the day of the election, to each person registered to vote in the municipality at that election, ensuring that, except for a primary election for the general election, the delivery envelope, which is the envelope that is used to mail the blank ballot, the outer envelope, and the inner envelope to each voter shall not contain any political affiliation or designation visible to the public on the envelope's exterior;
  - c. designate the county clerk's office or the municipal clerk's office as the places to obtain a replacement ballot pursuant to section 5 of P.L.2005, c.148 (C.19:62-5);
  - d. designate, after consultation with the county board of elections and pursuant to criteria established by the Secretary of State, places within the county or municipality that shall be available for the deposit of voted ballots for the election;
  - e. make a provisional ballot available at the office of the county clerk and the office of the municipal clerk so that each person who has been a resident of the county or municipality in which the person seeks to register and vote at least 21 days prior to the day of the election and has moved to a location within the municipality after that 21st day and prior to the day of the election may vote;
  - f. suspend distribution to each registered voter in the municipality of samples of the official ballot of any election, but distribute to each registered voter in the municipality with each ballot a copy of the voter information notice provided for in section 1 of P.L.2005, c.149 (C.19:12-7.1) as modified and supplemented by the Secretary of State as deemed appropriate for use in municipalities conducting elections by mail, and such instruction about the completion of the ballot as deemed necessary by the Secretary of State;
  - g. make certain that all qualified voters in the municipality requesting a mail-in ballot between the 45th day and the 21st day prior to the day of an election receive such ballot after the 20th day prior to the day of an election and voters requesting a ballot on or before the seventh day prior to the date of the election shall receive a ballot authorized pursuant to this section; and
  - h. establish, after consultation with the county board of elections and in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of State, the time by which all ballots must be received by the board on the day of an election to be considered

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1 valid and counted.<sup>1</sup>
2 (cf: P.L.2022, c.70, s.3)
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- 6. Section 8 of P.L.2005, c.148 (C.19:62-8) is amended to read as follows:
- 8. Prior to transmitting a ballot to the county board of elections, a registered voter shall mark it and place it in the inner envelope. The inner envelope shall then be placed in the outer envelope and that envelope shall be signed and certified by the voter pursuant to instructions provided with the ballot. The voter may return the envelopes containing the marked ballot to the county board by United States mail or by depositing it at the office of the county board or any other place of deposit designated for that purpose. [If the voter returns the ballot by United States mail, the voter shall provide the postage ] Each outer envelope shall be a postage prepaid return envelope.
- 17 (cf: P.L.2005, c.148, s.8)

- <sup>1</sup>[7. Section 12 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-12) is amended to read as follows:
  - 12. Each county clerk shall send, with each mail-in ballot, printed directions for the preparation and transmitting of the ballots as required by this act. The directions shall be printed in such manner and form as the Secretary of State shall require, together with two envelopes of such sizes that one will contain the other. The directions prepared by the Secretary of State shall inform the voter that the status of the voter's mail-in ballot may be checked using the free-access system provided in section 5 of P.L.2004, c.88 (C.19:61-5).
- The outer envelope shall be addressed to the county board of elections of the county in which is located the home address of the person to whom the mail-in ballot is sent, as certified by the county clerk. [At the discretion of the county clerk, the] The outer envelope [may] shall be a postage [paid] prepaid return envelope. On the outside and front of each outer envelope, there shall be printed or stamped the following:
- 37 To protect your vote:
- 38 IT IS AGAINST THE LAW FOR ANYONE EXCEPT YOU
  39 THE VOTER TO MAIL OR TRANSPORT THIS BALLOT
  40 UNLESS THE ENVELOPE IS SEALED AND THE FOLLOWING
  41 IS COMPLETED:
- 42 Ballot mailed or transported by
- 43 (signature of bearer)
- 44 (print name of bearer)
- 45 (address of bearer)
- The reserve side of the outer envelope shall contain the following:

#### REMINDER

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- 2 For your vote to count, you must:
- 3 1) Vote your ballot and place it in the inner envelope with the 4 attached certificate.
  - 2) Seal the envelope.
- 6 3) Place the envelope into the larger envelope addressed to the board of elections and seal that envelope.
- board of elections and seal that envelope.
  4) If another person will be mailing your ballot or bringing it to
  the board of elections, MAKE CERTAIN THAT PERSON
- 10 COMPLETES THE "BEARER PORTION" ON THE ENVELOPE
- 11 ADDRESSED TO THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS BEFORE THE
- 12 BALLOT IS TAKEN FROM YOU. NO PERSON WHO IS A
- 13 CANDIDATE IN THE ELECTION FOR WHICH THE VOTER
- 14 REQUESTS THIS BALLOT IS PERMITTED TO SERVE AS A
- 15 BEARER. NO PERSON IS PERMITTED TO SERVE AS A
- 16 BEARER FOR MORE THAN THREE QUALIFIED VOTERS IN
- 17 AN ELECTION, BUT A PERSON MAY SERVE AS SUCH FOR
- 18 UP TO FIVE QUALIFIED VOTERS IN AN ELECTION IF
- 19 THOSE VOTERS ARE IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS
- 20 RESIDING IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD AS THE BEARER.
  21 The Secretary of State is authorized to make such changes to
  - The Secretary of State is authorized to make such changes to the instructions for mail-in ballot materials as the Secretary of State deems necessary or as is mandated by federal or State law.
  - The inner envelope shall be so designed that it can be sealed after the mail-in ballot has been placed therein and the flap thereof shall be of such length and size as to leave sufficient margin, after sealing, for the printing thereon of the certificate hereinafter described. The flap shall be so arranged that, after the inner envelope has been sealed, the certificate can be contained, with the inner envelope, in the outer envelope, and that the margin containing the certificate can be detached without unsealing the
- 32 inner envelope.
- On the outside of each envelope in which a mail-in ballot is sent to a mail-in voter by the clerk, there shall be printed or stamped the words "Official Mail-In Ballot." In addition, there shall be printed or stamped the following:
- 37 To protect your vote:
- 38 IT IS AGAINST THE LAW FOR ANYONE EXCEPT YOU 39 THE VOTER TO OPEN, MARK, INSPECT OR SEAL THIS
- 40 BALLOT.
- 41 However, a family member may assist you in doing so.
- The reverse side of each inner envelope shall contain the following statement:
- 44 A PERSON MAY BE FINED AND IMPRISONED AND MAY
- 45 ALSO LOSE THE RIGHT TO VOTE UNTIL RESTORED BY
- 46 LAW if that person attempts to vote fraudulently by mail-in ballot,
- 47 prevents the voting of a legal voter, certifies falsely any

information, interferes with a person's secrecy of voting, tampers with ballots or election documents or helps another person to do so.

3 (cf: P.L.2015, c.84, s.4) $\mathbf{I}^1$ 

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- <sup>1</sup>7. Section 12 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-12) is amended to read as follows:
- 7 12. Each county clerk shall send, with each mail-in ballot, 8 printed directions for the preparation and transmitting of the ballots 9 as required by this act. The directions shall be printed in such 10 manner and form as the Secretary of State shall require, together 11 with two envelopes of such sizes that one will contain the other. 12 The directions prepared by the Secretary of State shall inform the 13 voter that the status of the voter's mail-in ballot may be checked 14 using the free-access system provided in section 5 of P.L.2004, c.88 15 (C.19:61-5). Except for a primary election for the general election, 16 each county clerk shall ensure that the delivery envelope, which is 17 the envelope that is used to mail the blank ballot, the outer envelope, and the inner envelope to each voter shall not contain any 18 19 political affiliation or designation visible to the public on the
  - The outer envelope shall be addressed to the county board of elections of the county in which is located the home address of the person to whom the mail-in ballot is sent, as certified by the county clerk. [At the discretion of the county clerk, the] The outer envelope [may] shall be a postage [paid] prepaid return envelope. On the outside and front of each outer envelope, there shall be printed or stamped the following:
  - To protect your vote:

envelope's exterior.

- 29 IT IS AGAINST THE LAW FOR ANYONE EXCEPT YOU 30 THE VOTER TO MAIL OR TRANSPORT THIS BALLOT 31 UNLESS THE ENVELOPE IS SEALED AND THE FOLLOWING
- 32 IS COMPLETED:
- 33 Ballot mailed or transported by
- 34 (signature of bearer)
- 35 (print name of bearer)
- 36 (address of bearer)
- The reserve side of the outer envelope shall contain the following:
- 39 REMINDER
- For your vote to count, you must:
- 1) Vote your ballot and place it in the inner envelope with the attached certificate.
- 43 2) Seal the envelope.
- 44 3) Place the envelope into the larger envelope addressed to the board of elections and seal that envelope.
- 46 4) If another person will be mailing your ballot or bringing it to 47 the board of elections, MAKE CERTAIN THAT PERSON 48 COMPLETES THE "BEARER PORTION" ON THE ENVELOPE

- 1 ADDRESSED TO THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS BEFORE THE
- BALLOT IS TAKEN FROM YOU. NO PERSON WHO IS A 2
- CANDIDATE IN THE ELECTION FOR WHICH THE VOTER 3
- REQUESTS THIS BALLOT IS PERMITTED TO SERVE AS A 4
- 5 NO PERSON IS PERMITTED TO SERVE AS A
- BEARER FOR MORE THAN THREE QUALIFIED VOTERS IN 6
- 7 AN ELECTION, BUT A PERSON MAY SERVE AS SUCH FOR
- UP TO FIVE QUALIFIED VOTERS IN AN ELECTION IF 8
- 9 THOSE VOTERS ARE IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS 10
  - RESIDING IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD AS THE BEARER.

11 The Secretary of State is authorized to make such changes to the 12 instructions for mail-in ballot materials as the Secretary of State 13 deems necessary or as is mandated by federal or State law.

The inner envelope shall be so designed that it can be sealed after the mail-in ballot has been placed therein and the flap thereof shall be of such length and size as to leave sufficient margin, after sealing, for the printing thereon of the certificate hereinafter The flap shall be so arranged that, after the inner envelope has been sealed, the certificate can be contained, with the inner envelope, in the outer envelope, and that the margin containing the certificate can be detached without unsealing the inner envelope.

On the outside of each envelope in which a mail-in ballot is sent to a mail-in voter by the clerk, there shall be printed or stamped the words "Official Mail-In Ballot." In addition, there shall be printed or stamped the following:

To protect your vote:

IT IS AGAINST THE LAW FOR ANYONE EXCEPT YOU THE VOTER TO OPEN, MARK, INSPECT OR SEAL THIS BALLOT.

However, a family member may assist you in doing so.

The reverse side of each inner envelope shall contain the 32 following statement: 33

A PERSON MAY BE FINED AND IMPRISONED AND MAY ALSO LOSE THE RIGHT TO VOTE UNTIL RESTORED BY LAW if that person attempts to vote fraudulently by mail-in ballot, prevents the voting of a legal voter, certifies falsely any information, interferes with a person's secrecy of voting, tampers with ballots or election documents or helps another person to do so.<sup>1</sup>

41 (cf: P.L.2022, c.69, s.5)

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8. (New section) Upon application for reimbursement by a county governing body to the Secretary of State, and approval of the application by the State Treasurer or the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the Department of the Treasury, reimbursement shall be made by the State to the county for the costs of affixing proper and sufficient first-class or air-mail

#### S1235 [1R] GREENSTEIN, ZWICKER

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- 1 postage to the mail-in ballot outer envelopes, and for any additional
- 2 costs incurred by the county as a result of the provisions of P.L. ,
- 3 c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

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9. This act shall take effect immediately.