

SENATE, No. 1888

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 28, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Turner

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

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/21/2022)

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:*

8
9 1. (New section) Notwithstanding the provisions of R.S.19:4-1, or
10 any other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, any registered voter
11 who is 17 years of age prior to the date on which a primary election for
12 the general election is held shall be permitted to vote in that primary
13 election if the registered voter attains 18 years of age on or before the
14 day of the next succeeding general election.

15
16 2. R.S.19:31-5 is amended to read as follows:

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

30 Whenever an individual registers by mail after January 1, 2003 to
31 vote for the first time in his or her current county of residence, that
32 individual shall provide either the individual's New Jersey driver's
33 license number or the last four digits of the individual's Social Security
34 Number, or shall submit with the voter registration form a copy of: (1)
35 a current and valid photo identification card; (2) a current utility bill,
36 bank statement, government check or pay check; (3) any other
37 government document that shows the individual's name and current
38 address; or (4) any other identifying document that the Attorney
39 General has determined to be acceptable for this purpose. If the
40 individual does not provide his or her New Jersey driver's license
41 number or Social Security Number information or submit a copy of
42 any one of these documents, either at the time of registration or at any
43 time thereafter prior to attempting to vote, the individual shall be asked
44 for identification when voting for the first time starting at the first
45 election held after January 1, 2004 at which candidates are seeking

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

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

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

29 (cf: P.L.2015, c.222, s.1)

30

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

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34

35 STATEMENT

36

37 This bill, designated as the "New Voter Empowerment Act," permits
38 any registered voter who is 17 years of age prior to the date on which a
39 primary election for the general election is held to vote in that primary
40 election if the registered voter attains 18 years of age on or before the day
41 of the next succeeding general election.

42 Current law permits a person who is at least 17 years of age to register
43 to vote if the person will be at least 18 at the time of the election.
44 However, the person is designated in the Statewide Voter Registration
45 System as temporarily ineligible to vote until that person's 18th birthday.
46 This bill would permit that person to vote in a primary election
47 notwithstanding that the person is not yet 18 years of age, as long as the
48 person attains 18 years of age on or before the next general election.