

P.L. 2025, CHAPTER 322, *approved January 20, 2026*
Senate, No. 4835 (*Third Reprint*)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the curing of a mail-in ballot and amending
2 P.L.1999, c.232 and P.L.2009, c.79.
3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:
6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
8 a. Protecting an individual’s right to vote is essential to
9 maintaining a fair and functioning democracy where every voice is
10 heard.
11 b. Establishing voting safeguards for mail-in ballots are crucial
12 to ensure that every legitimate vote is counted accurately, while
13 protecting against errors and potential fraud.
14 c. Permitting individuals to vote by mail expands participation,
15 particularly for those who cannot vote in-person due to disability,
16 work, or health concerns.
17 d. Notifying voters that their mail-in ballot will be disqualified
18 unless the voters cure rejected mail-in ballots helps ensure that
19 small errors do not lead to the loss of legitimate votes.
20 e. Transparent and accessible ballot correction processes build
21 trust in elections and uphold the integrity of the democratic system.
22
23 2. Section 7 of P.L.1999, c.232 (C.19:53C-1) is amended to read
24 as follows:
25 7. a. (1) The county clerk or the municipal clerk, in the case of
26 a municipal election, shall arrange for the preparation of a
27 provisional ballot packet for each election district. It shall include
28 the appropriate number of provisional ballots, the appropriate
29 number of envelopes with an affirmation statement, the appropriate
30 number of written notices to be distributed to voters who vote by
31 provisional ballot and one provisional ballot inventory form affixed
32 to the provisional ballot bag. The clerk shall arrange for the
33 preparation of and placement in each provisional ballot bag of a
34 provisional ballot packet and an envelope containing a numbered
35 seal. The envelope shall contain, on its face, the instructions for the
36 use of the seal, the number and the election district location of the
37 provisional ballot bag, and the identification numbers of the seal
38 placed in the envelope. Each provisional ballot bag shall be sealed

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.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
¹Senate SBA committee amendments adopted November 13, 2025.
²Assembly ASL committee amendments adopted January 5, 2026.
³Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted January 8, 2026.

1 with a numbered security seal before being forwarded to the
2 appropriate election district.

3 (2) Each provisional ballot bag and the inventory of the contents
4 of each such bag shall be delivered to the designated polling place
5 no later than the opening of the polls on the day of an election.

6 b. The county clerk or the municipal clerk, in the case of a
7 municipal election, shall arrange for the preparation of the
8 envelope, affirmation statement, and written notice that is to
9 accompany each provisional ballot. The envelope shall be of
10 sufficient size to accommodate the provisional ballot, and the
11 affirmation statement shall be affixed thereto in a manner that
12 enables it to be detached once completed and verified by the county
13 commissioner of registration. The statement shall require the voter
14 to provide the voter's name, and to indicate whether the voter is
15 registered to vote in a county but has moved within that county
16 since registering to vote; or is registered to vote in the election
17 district in which that polling place is located but the voter's
18 registration information is missing or otherwise deficient; or
19 indicate the voter has applied for a mail-in ballot and not received
20 either the ballot or an explanation for not receiving such a ballot
21 pursuant to notification by the county clerk or from the free-access
22 system, or has applied for and received a mail-in ballot and has not
23 transmitted it to the county board of elections or given it to a bearer
24 for delivery to the county board before the time for the opening of
25 the polls on the day of an election but wants, nevertheless, to vote
26 in the election, or has applied for and received a mail-in ballot and
27 transmitted it to the county board of elections and has received a
28 cure letter, pursuant to section 17 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-17),
29 and wants to vote in-person in the election, either during the early
30 voting period or on election day, using a provisional ballot instead
31 of curing the mail-in ballot. The statement shall further require the
32 voter to provide the voter's most recent prior voter registration
33 address and address on the day of the election and date of birth.
34 The statement shall include the statement: "I swear or affirm, that
35 the foregoing statements made by me are true and correct and that I
36 understand that any fraudulent voting may subject me to a fine of
37 up to \$15,000, imprisonment up to five years or both, pursuant to
38 R.S.19:34-11." It shall be followed immediately by spaces for the
39 voter's signature and printed name, and in the case of a name
40 change, the voter's printed old and new name and a signature for
41 each name, the date the statement was completed, political party
42 affiliation, if used in a primary election, and the name of the person
43 providing assistance to the voter, if applicable. Each statement
44 shall also provide spaces for the voter's telephone number and email
45 address, including language informing the voter that this contact
46 information will be used to contact the voter concerning the
47 acceptance or rejection of the ballot, and how the voter may cure a
48 defect. A voter's telephone number and email address shall not be
49 subject to public disclosure and shall not be considered a

1 government record. Each statement shall also note the number of
2 the election district, or ward, and name of the municipality at which
3 the statement will be used. The Secretary of State shall prepare for
4 inclusion in the affirmation statement language for the voter to
5 submit the information required in the registration form described
6 in section 16 of P.L.1974, c.30 (C.19:31-6.4) in order to enable the
7 county commissioner of registration to process the statement as a
8 voter registration application, which shall be valid for future
9 elections if the individual who submitted the provisional ballot is
10 determined not to be a registered voter. The Secretary of State shall
11 also prepare and shall provide language for any written instructions
12 necessary to assure proper completion of the statement.

13 The written notice shall contain information to be distributed to
14 each voter who votes by provisional ballot. The notice shall state
15 that, if the voter is a mail-in registrant voting for the first time in his
16 or her current county of residence following registration and was
17 given a provisional ballot because he or she did not provide
18 required personal identification information, the voter shall be
19 given until the close of business on the second day after the election
20 to provide identification to the applicable county commissioner of
21 registration, and the notice shall contain a telephone number at
22 which the commissioner may be contacted. The notice shall further
23 state that failure to provide the required personal identification
24 information within that time period shall result in the rejection of
25 the ballot. The notice shall state that pursuant to section 4 of
26 P.L.2004, c.88 (C.19:61-4), any individual who casts a provisional
27 ballot will be able to ascertain under a system established by the
28 State whether the ballot was accepted for counting, and if the vote
29 was not counted, the reason for the rejection of the ballot. The
30 notice shall include instructions on how to access such information.

31 c. For the primary for the general election, the provisional
32 ballots shall be printed in ink on paper of a color that matches the
33 color of the voting authority, which shall indicate the party primary
34 of the voter. The provisional ballots shall be uniform in size, quality
35 and type and of a thickness that the printing thereon cannot be
36 distinguished from the back of the paper, and without any mark,
37 device or figure on the front or back other than as provided in
38 P.L.1999, c.232 (C.19:53C-1 et seq.). Each such ballot shall
39 include near the top thereof and in large type the designation
40 PROVISIONAL BALLOT. In all other respects, the provisional
41 ballots shall conform generally to the other ballots to be used in the
42 election district for the primary election.

43 The clerk of the county or municipality shall arrange for the
44 preparation of each provisional ballot package with an appropriate
45 number of provisional ballots for each political party, a
46 corresponding number of envelopes with affirmation statements,
47 and a corresponding number of written notices. Additional
48 provisional ballots, envelopes, and notices shall be available for

1 delivery to that election district on the day of the election, if
2 necessary.

3 d. For the general election the provisional ballots shall be
4 printed in ink. The provisional ballots shall be uniform in size,
5 quality and type and of a thickness that the printing thereon cannot
6 be distinguished from the back of the paper, and without any mark,
7 device or figure on the front or back other than as provided in this
8 act. Each such ballot shall include near the top thereof and in large
9 type the designation PROVISIONAL BALLOT. In all other
10 respects, the provisional ballots shall conform generally to the other
11 ballots to be used in the election district for the general election.

12 The clerk of the county or municipality shall arrange for the
13 preparation of each provisional ballot package with an appropriate
14 number of provisional ballots, a corresponding number of envelopes
15 with affirmation statements, and a corresponding number of written
16 notices. Additional provisional ballots, envelopes, and notices shall
17 be available for delivery to that election district on the day of the
18 election, if necessary.

19 e. For a school election the provisional ballots shall be printed
20 in ink. The provisional ballots shall be uniform in size, quality and
21 type and of a thickness that the printing thereon cannot be
22 distinguished from the back of the paper, and without any mark,
23 device or figure on the front or back other than as provided in this
24 act. Each such ballot shall include near the top thereof and in large
25 type the designation PROVISIONAL BALLOT. In all other
26 respects, the provisional ballots shall conform generally to the other
27 ballots to be used in the election district for the school election.

28 The clerk of the county shall arrange for the preparation of each
29 provisional ballot package with an appropriate number of
30 provisional ballots, a corresponding number of envelopes with
31 affirmation statements, and a corresponding number of written
32 notices. Additional provisional ballots, envelopes, and notices shall
33 be available for delivery to that election district on the day of the
34 election, if necessary.

35 f. Following the effective date of P.L.2004, c.88 (C.19:61-1 et
36 al.), a provisional ballot that requires the voter to punch out a hole
37 in the ballot as a means of recording the voter's vote shall not be
38 used in any election in this State.

39 g. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.2011, c.134).
40 (cf: P.L.2020, c.70, s.7)

41

42 3. Section 17 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-17) is amended to read
43 as follows:

44 17. a. The county board of elections shall, promptly after
45 receiving each mail-in ballot, remove the inner envelope containing
46 the ballot from the outer envelope and shall compare the signature
47 and the information contained on the flap of the inner envelope with
48 the signature and information contained in the respective requests
49 for mail-in ballots and the signature and information contained in

1 the Statewide voter registration system. In addition, as to mail-in
2 ballots issued less than seven days prior to an election, the county
3 board of elections shall also check to establish that the mail-in voter
4 did not vote in person. The county board shall reject such a ballot if
5 it is not satisfied, pursuant to a comparison with the Statewide voter
6 registration system, that the voter is legally entitled to vote and that
7 the ballot conforms with the requirements of this act. The county
8 board of elections shall conduct the determination of qualification
9 of each voter in accordance with the requirements of the Certificate
10 of Mail-in Voter pursuant to section 13 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-
11 13). In the case of a mail-in ballot to be voted at a primary
12 election for the general election, the ballot shall be rejected if the
13 mail-in voter has indicated in the certificate the voter's intention to
14 vote in a primary election of any political party in which the voter is
15 not entitled to vote according to the Statewide voter registration
16 system, and if it shall appear from the record that the voter is not
17 entitled to vote in a primary election of the political party which has
18 been so indicated.

19 Any mail-in ballot which is received by a county board of
20 elections shall be rejected if the inner envelope is unsealed or if
21 either the inner or outer envelope has a seal that has been tampered
22 with, except that when the voter failed to insert the voted mail-in
23 ballot in the inner envelope, or failed to ³[sign or]³ complete the
24 certificate of mail-in voter on the inner envelope, or when the inner
25 or outer envelope is missing or unsealed, or when the seal has been
26 tampered with, the county board of elections shall permit the voter
27 to cure the mail-in ballot as provided under subsection b. of this
28 section. Mail-in ballots shall not be rejected due to any defect
29 arising out of or relating to the preparation or mailing of the ballot
30 or envelope that was not reasonably caused by the voters, such as a
31 torn envelope and missing or insufficient glue to allow the ballot to
32 be sealed.

33 Disputes about the qualifications of a mail-in voter to vote or
34 about whether or not or how any mail-in ballot shall be counted in
35 such election shall be referred to the Superior Court for
36 determination, as provided under section 4 of P.L.2020, c.70
37 (C.19:63-17.1).

38 After such investigation, the county board of elections shall
39 detach or separate the certificate from the inner envelope containing
40 the mail-in ballot, unless it has been rejected by it or by the
41 Superior Court, marking the envelope so as to identify the election
42 district in which the ballot contained therein is to be voted as
43 indicated by the voter's home address appearing on the certificate
44 attached to or accompanying the inner envelope and, in the case of
45 ballots to be voted at a primary election for a general election, so as
46 to identify the political party in the primary election of which it is
47 to be voted.

48 The location at which a county board of elections determines
49 whether a mail-in ballot shall be accepted or rejected shall be

1 considered an election district for the purposes of appointment of
2 challengers. ²The determination of ballot acceptance, rejection, and
3 curing pursuant to this section shall be subject to observation by
4 duly appointed challengers; provided, however, that challengers
5 shall not participate in, interfere with, object during, or otherwise
6 delay the cure, review, or supervisory determination process for the
7 acceptance, rejection, and curing of a mail-in ballot.²

8 b. The county board of elections shall, promptly after receiving
9 each mail-in ballot, undertake the ²**[following]**² procedures and
10 requirements concerning the acceptance or rejection of each mail-in
11 ballot ²enumerated in this subsection² , which shall not require a
12 vote of the board of elections to be undertaken ²; provided,
13 however, that any preliminary determination to reject a mail-in
14 ballot pursuant to this subsection shall be made by trained elections
15 employees designated by the county board of elections and shall be
16 subject to supervisory review designated by the county board of
17 elections before the issuance of a cure letter or a final rejection. The
18 supervisory review shall be conducted by two supervisory officials
19 of different political party affiliations, where practicable. No mail-
20 in ballot shall be finally rejected without such supervisory review.
21 The procedures and requirements concerning the acceptance or
22 rejection of each mail-in ballot shall be as follows² :

23 (1) within 24 hours after the decision has been made to reject a
24 voter's mail-in or provisional ballot on the basis of a missing
25 signature or discrepant signature, issue a "Cure Letter" by mail or
26 email to the voter whose ballot was rejected, which shall inform the
27 voter of that fact and provide the reasoning for rejection, and
28 attempt to contact the voter by telephone, if a telephone number is
29 available. The cure letter shall include a "Cure Form" and the form
30 shall include the voter's name and instruct the voter on how to cure
31 the alleged or actual deficiency. Cure forms shall not be referred to
32 as affidavits or certifications and shall not be required to be sworn;

33 (2) when the alleged or actual deficiency involves the signature
34 of the voter, instruct the voter that they may cure the deficiency by
35 completing the cure form and returning it to the county board of
36 elections in person, by fax, or by email, not later than 48 hours prior
37 to the final certification of the results of the election other than the
38 general election, or in the case of a general election within 11 days
39 after the general election, or by returning it to the county board of
40 elections by mail, and that the completed cure form must be
41 received by the county board of elections not later than 48 hours
42 prior to the final certification of the results of the election other
43 than the general election, or in the case of a general election within
44 11 days after the general election;

45 (3) include, with the cure letter, when sent by mail, a pre-printed
46 cure form and a postage-paid return envelope addressed to the
47 county board of elections which the voter may use to return the cure
48 form; **[and]**

1 (4) inform voters that they shall not be required to submit any
2 form of hard-copy identification document or copy thereof in order
3 to cure a signature deficiency, but may do so by declaring that they
4 submitted their provisional ballot or mail-in ballot, and verifying
5 their identity by either: (a) providing a valid New Jersey driver's
6 license number or Motor Vehicle Commission non-driver
7 identification number; or (b) if the voter does not have a valid New
8 Jersey driver's license number or Motor Vehicle Commission non-
9 driver identification number, then by providing the last four digits
10 of their Social Security Number; or (c) if the voter does not have
11 the identification in (a) or (b), then attaching a legible copy of a
12 New Jersey State-accepted form of identification, including either a
13 sample ballot which lists the voter's name and address, an official
14 federal, State, county, or municipal document which lists the voter's
15 name and address, or a utility bill, telephone bill, or tax or rent
16 receipt which lists the voter's name and address; and (d) signing and
17 dating the cure form prior to returning it;

18 (5) when the deficiency is because the voter failed to insert the
19 voted mail-in ballot in the inner envelope, or failed to ³[sign or]³
20 complete the certificate of mail-in voter on the inner envelope, or
21 when the inner or outer envelope is missing or unsealed, or when
22 the seal appears to have been tampered with, ²or due to any
23 deficiency other than a missing or discrepant signature subject to
24 the curing procedures otherwise specified in this section,² provide
25 the voter with a new mail-in ballot, inform the voter of the defect
26 through the cure letter required pursuant to this subsection, and
27 permit the voter to cure the defect by submitting ¹[a] the¹ new
28 completed ballot ¹[in accordance with the same requirements,
29 procedures, and timeframes specified for the completion and
30 submission of cure forms in this subsection] by mail, returning it to
31 the county board of elections in person, or placing it into a ballot
32 drop box, in accordance with the timeframes applicable to the return
33 of completed mail-in ballots provided under current law¹; ²except
34 that the requirement to provide a new mail-in ballot to a voter under
35 this paragraph shall be implemented only if the county board of
36 elections can identify the name and address of the voter using
37 official pre-printed information on the voter's ballot or envelope
38 materials, and if the new mail-in ballot can be provided to the voter
39 in accordance with the timeframes specified under section 3 of
40 P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-3);² and

41 (6) when a voter has applied for and received a mail-in ballot
42 and transmitted it to the county board of elections and has received
43 a cure letter and, if applicable, a cure form, for any reason as
44 provided in this subsection, prior to the day of the election, the
45 voter shall be permitted to vote in-person, either during the early
46 voting period or on election day, using a provisional ballot pursuant
47 to section 7 of P.L.1999, c.232 (C.19:53C-1).

1 All cure letters shall include instructions informing the voter of
2 the option to vote in-person, either during the early voting period or
3 on election day, using a provisional ballot instead of having to
4 return the cure form or replacement mail-in ballot, as applicable.

5 c. If a voter returns a completed cure form in a timely manner
6 and the information provided verifies the voter's identity, pursuant
7 to this section, their otherwise valid mail-in or provisional ballot
8 shall be counted in the final election results irrespective of any
9 signature deficiency previously identified and, under those
10 circumstances, the cure form may not be verified or authenticated
11 using signature matching.

12 d. In accordance with this section, variations in voter
13 signatures caused by the substitution of initials for the first name,
14 middle name, or both, shall not be grounds for the county board of
15 elections to determine that the signatures are non-conforming or do
16 not match.

17 e. In cases of rejected ballots, the county board of elections
18 shall retain the voter's outer envelope, inner envelope, self-
19 certification certificate, and mail-in ballot in a bundle unique to
20 each voter for a period of two years in accordance with section 24
21 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-24).

22 f. County boards of elections shall be required to meet at least
23 ²[twice each week during the four-week period preceding each
24 general election and at least]² once each week during the three-
25 week period preceding [each election] ²[all other elections] each
26 election² to conduct the ballot processing and curing provisions
27 specified in this section, and shall meet more frequently as may be
28 required by the Secretary of State to ensure the timely processing of
29 ballots.

30 ²g.² The Secretary of State shall prepare educational materials
31 regarding this section that all employed county boards of elections
32 employees handling ballots shall read and have available for
33 review. The materials shall provide clear information regarding the
34 standards for acceptance and rejection of mail-in ballots and the
35 safe-keeping of all materials in the case of rejection. The materials
36 shall serve an educational purpose for the county board of elections
37 and shall not replace, supersede, or void the authority of the county
38 board or a judge of the Superior Court to accept or reject a mail-in
39 ballot.

40 ²h. Any issuance and receipt of a cure letter, cure form, and new
41 mail-in ballot pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be
42 recorded in the voter's record in the Statewide Voter Registration
43 System. Prior to July 1, 2026, the Secretary of State shall cause
44 such changes to be made to that system as may be necessary to
45 facilitate the recording requirements of this subsection, and shall
46 certify to the Legislature and county boards of elections that the
47 Statewide Voter Registration System has been updated, tested, and
48 deployed to support the requirements of P.L. , c. (pending

1 before the Legislature as this bill), which certification shall include,
2 but may not be limited to:

3 (1) the recording of the issuance and receipt of cure letters, cure
4 forms, and new mail-in ballots;

5 (2) the tracking of supervisory review determinations; and

6 (3) the ability of county boards of elections to uniformly comply
7 with the provisions of this section.

8 i. Notwithstanding any provision of this section, or any other
9 law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, a county board of elections
10 shall not be required to issue a cure letter, cure form, or a new mail-
11 in ballot to any voter, or otherwise contact the voter, when the voter
12 cannot be identified by the county board of elections using official
13 pre-printed information on the voter's ballot or envelope materials.²

14 (cf: P.L.2023, c.124, s.16)

15
16 ¹4. Section 20 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-20) is amended to read
17 as follows:

18 20. a. Any person who has applied for a mail-in ballot and has had
19 the mail-in ballot either delivered in person or forwarded by mail, and
20 voted and returned the voted ballot to the county board, shall not be
21 permitted to vote in person at the polling place in the voter's election
22 district on the day of the election.

23 b. Any person who: (1) has applied for a mail-in ballot and not
24 received either the ballot or an explanation for not receiving such a
25 ballot pursuant to notification by the county clerk or from the free-
26 access system established pursuant to section 5 of P.L.2004, c.88
27 (C.19:61-5) to provide such information; (2) has applied for and
28 received a mail-in ballot and has not transmitted it to the county board
29 of elections or given it to a bearer for delivery to the county board
30 before the time for the opening of the polls on the day of an election;
31 or (3) has applied for and received a mail-in ballot and has not
32 transmitted it to the county board of elections or given it to the bearer
33 for delivery to the county board, but appears at the polling place
34 without the ballot and wishes to vote, shall be permitted to vote in
35 person by provisional ballot at the polling place in the voter's election
36 district on the day of the election.

37 c. Any person who has received a notification that the voter's
38 mail-in ballot was not submitted properly due to a defect under section
39 17 of P.L.2009, c.79 (C.19:63-17) shall be permitted to vote in person
40 by provisional ballot at the polling place in the voter's election district
41 on the day of the election.¹

42 (cf: P.L.2018, c.72, s.7)

43
44 ¹**[4.] 5.¹** This act shall take effect ²**[immediately]** on July 1,
45 2026 if the Secretary of State has certified prior to that date that the
46 Statewide Voter Registration System and all county boards of
47 elections are ready to comply with the provisions of this act, or shall
48 take effect after July 1, 2026 on the first day of the first month

1 immediately following such certification, but the Secretary of State,
2 county clerks, county boards of election, and any other public officials
3 may take any anticipatory actions prior to that effective date deemed
4 necessary for the implementation of this act².

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9 Allows voter to cure mail-in ballot due to certain envelope
10 deficiencies or missing certificate, and to vote by provisional ballot
11 following receipt of cure letter.