

SENATE, No. 4812

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 15, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator PARKER SPACE
District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

SYNOPSIS

Repeals “John R. Lewis Voter Empowerment Act of New Jersey.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning certain voting practices and election policies in
2 this State and repealing the “John R. Lewis Voter Empowerment
3 Act of New Jersey,” P.L.2026, c.31.

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

7
8 1. P.L.2026, c.31 (C.19:15B-1 through 19:15B-22) is repealed.

9
10 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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12
13 STATEMENT

14
15 This bill repeals the “John R. Lewis Voter Empowerment Act of
16 New Jersey.”

17 Under current law, elections officials are prohibited from
18 prescribing or maintaining voting or elections policies and practices
19 that unnecessarily deny or abridge the right to vote. Local election
20 offices and political subdivisions are also prohibited from using a
21 method of election that has the effect of impairing the ability of
22 members of a protected class to elect candidates of their choice or
23 influence the outcome of elections, as a result of vote dilution. Any
24 policy or practice that burdens the right to vote is required to be
25 justified by a compelling State interest. Current law also specifies
26 criteria for determining if a violation of law has occurred, including
27 if a voter’s right to vote has been violated or if the voter has
28 experienced vote dilution.

29 The Attorney General is tasked with investigating and enforcing
30 penalties for alleged violations of voting rights.

31 If a violation occurs, current law provides a remedy process,
32 including for county and municipal apportionment and redistricting
33 maps. First, a New Jersey Voter Empowerment Act (NJVEA)
34 notification letter is mailed from a prospective plaintiff to a political
35 subdivision, after which time the political subdivision may pass an
36 NJVEA resolution affirming: (1) the political subdivision's
37 intention to enact and implement a remedy for a potential violation;
38 (2) specific steps the political subdivision will undertake to
39 facilitate approval and implementation of such a remedy; and (3) a
40 schedule for enacting and implementing such a remedy. If the
41 governing body of a political subdivision lacks the authority to
42 enact or implement a remedy identified in the resolution, or fails to
43 enact or implement a remedy identified in the resolution within 140
44 days after the passage of the resolution, or if the political
45 subdivision is a covered entity, the governing body of the political
46 subdivision must coordinate with the Attorney General to resolve
47 the violation, including affirming that any proposal is unlikely to

1 violate the United States Constitution, New Jersey Constitution, or
2 any federal or State law, and is feasible to implement.

3 Current law also provides the Attorney General with certain
4 preclearance powers. Preclearance is the process of reviewing an
5 election-related policy, procedure, or practice prior to its
6 implementation.

7 Under current law, political subdivisions may be subject to
8 preclearance if they have been involved in certain legal actions
9 concerning discrimination or the violation of voting rights.
10 Counties and political subdivisions that meet certain criteria
11 regarding the number of voters belonging to a protected class, arrest
12 rates within the jurisdiction, or certain percentages of voter
13 participation in elections within the jurisdiction may additionally be
14 subject to preclearance procedures.

15 Covered entities are required to seek approval from the Attorney
16 General prior to adopting or implementing any changes to voting
17 procedures or qualifications within the jurisdiction. This includes
18 voter registration and the maintenance of voter rolls, dates and
19 methods of an election, assignment of election districts, early voting
20 locations and polling place hours, and additional topics as
21 designated by the Attorney General. Covered entities must also
22 submit their at-large method of election to the Attorney General for
23 review and approval following a federal decennial census.

24 Current law also requires assistance to language-minority groups.
25 A local election office or a political subdivision that administers
26 elections must provide language-related assistance in voting and
27 elections to a language-minority group in a political subdivision
28 based on data from the United States Census Bureau American
29 Community Survey, or data of comparable quality collected by a
30 State, county, or local public office, if: (1) more than two percent,
31 but in no instance fewer than 300 individuals, of citizens of voting
32 age of a political subdivision speak a particular shared language
33 other than English and are limited English proficient; or (2) more
34 than 4,000 of citizens of voting age of a political subdivision speak
35 a particular shared language other than English and are limited
36 English proficient.

37 Additionally, a local election office or political subdivision that
38 is required to provide language assistance to a particular language-
39 minority group must provide voting materials in the covered
40 language of an equal quality of the corresponding English language
41 materials, including registration or voting notices, forms,
42 instructions, assistance, or other physical or online materials or
43 information relating to the electoral process, including ballots.
44 When a designated language has more than one spoken dialect, the
45 local election office or political subdivision must ascertain the
46 dialects that are commonly used by members of the applicable
47 language minority group in the jurisdiction and provide oral
48 assistance in such dialects.

1 Under current law, any aggrieved persons or organization whose
2 membership includes aggrieved persons or members of a protected
3 class, any organization whose mission, in whole or in part, is to
4 ensure voting access and such mission would be hindered by a
5 violation of these provisions, or the Attorney General, may file an
6 action in court. Upon a finding that a violation has occurred, a
7 court may order any remedy necessary to cure the violation.

8 Lastly, current law requires the maintenance of a publicly
9 accessible elections database by the Division of Elections in the
10 Department of State.

11 This bill would repeal each of these provisions of current law.