



HOUSE BILL 958: Election Law Changes.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	July 28, 2026
Introduced by:	Reps. Blackwell, Stevens	Prepared by:	Erika Churchill, Jessica Sammons, Hillary Woodard
Analysis of:	Seventh Edition		Staff Attorneys

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 958 would make various changes to the State's election laws.*

CURRENT LAW & BILL ANALYSIS:

Administrative Matters: The State Board of Elections (State Board) administers elections; oversees campaign finance laws; and provides guidance, advice, and training to the county boards of elections (county boards). Each county board has supervisory authority over the conduct of elections within that county.

The bill would make the following changes with respect to administrative matters related to elections:

- Clarify that a county board may suspend or remove precinct officials at any time, including throughout the day of a primary or election, authorize a county board to prohibit a precinct official from serving in any subsequent election, specify training requirements for precinct officials, and require county boards to appoint at least four emergency election-day assistants. (**Section 1.1**)
- Authorize a nonpartisan candidate to designate one registered voter to serve as an observer at each voting place where the candidate would appear on the ballot for a municipal election, special district election, or local board of education election. (**Section 1.2**)
- Move the October primary for the nonpartisan primary and election method and the October election for the nonpartisan election and runoff method to September of the odd-numbered year, with the election or runoff, if needed, held in November of that odd-numbered year. (**Section 1.3**)
- Require a candidate filing in a party primary to be affiliated with that political party for at least 365 days as of the date of filing rather than 90 days, unless a waiver is granted by the State executive committee of that political party or the political party has been recognized by the State for less than two years. (**Section 1.4**)
- Clarify that counties, cities, and local boards of education must use the most recent federal decennial census data when establishing or revising electoral district boundaries and not other population estimates. (**Section 1.5**)

Registration of Voters: Individuals applying for voter registration or updating voter registration information may submit a voter registration application by mail, fax, scan, or in person. Additionally, an individual may complete an application to register to vote or update their voter registration when applying for original issuance, renewal, or correction of a drivers license or special identification card at the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or by using the DMV's online website. Certain state public assistance agencies also offer voter registration services, as required by federal law.

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The State Board and county boards are required to maintain the list of eligible voters in the State by removing ineligible voters and updating addresses and other necessary data of those who remain on the official list of eligible voters. To comply with list maintenance requirements, the State Board and county boards may enter into data sharing agreements with other states to cross-check information on voter registration and voting records.

The bill would make the following changes regarding maintaining a list of eligible voters in the State:

- Require the DMV to provide social security numbers to the State Board on a routine basis of no later than the fifteenth day of each month. (**Section 2.1**)
- Require the State Board to forward any voter registration applications to the county board in a timely manner, or within five business days of receipt if received by the State Board within 100 days before an election. (**Section 2.2**)
- Require the Executive Director to use information received from a federal agency to identify registered voters who are deceased and provide those identified names to the county boards within one week of receipt. The county boards would be required to remove the names of the deceased voters from their voter registration records within one week of receipt of the names, and the State Board must confirm that those names were removed. (**Section 2.3**)
- Provide that any voter registration received from other states pursuant to a data sharing agreement with that state is not a public record. (**Section 2.3**)
- Require the State Board to create a process for removing non-eligible citizens from the voter registration records if the registered voter appears on information received by the State Board from a federal database on or after January 1, 2026, and a challenge has not yet been entered against the registered voter. (**Section 2.3**)
- Prohibit any employee of the DMV or a public agency offering voter registration services from proceeding with a voter registration application unless the applicant affirmatively indicates that he or she is a citizen of the United States. (**Section 2.4**)
- Require that a county board only process a voter registration application that affirmatively indicates that the applicant is a citizen of the United States. If a county board receives a voter registration application with no answer indicated as to the question of whether the applicant is a citizen of the United States, the county board would be required to send the applicant a form, to be completed by the applicant under penalty of perjury, for the applicant to indicate whether he or she is a citizen of the United States. If the form is completed and returned by the applicant within 30 days of the mailing, the county board would proceed with the voter registration application accordingly. (**Section 2.4**)

Conduct of Elections:

Early Voting: Early voting begins no earlier than the third Thursday before an election and ends no later than 3:00 P.M. on the last Saturday before that election, for a period of 17 days. During the early voting period, a voter may appear in person at the county board office or at the early voting sites established by the county board. Early voting must be conducted from 8:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. on the last Saturday before an election. Additionally, early voting may occur for certain congressional elections, special elections, and municipal elections.

Challenges to Ballots: Any registered voter of the county may challenge the right of any person to register, remain registered, or vote in the county. Challenges can be made to a ballot cast during early voting or on the day of the primary or election at the time the voter offers to vote in person. Challenges can be made

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to a traditional mail-in absentee ballot up to 5:00 P.M. on the fifth business day after the election. Challenges may be made based on residency, age, felony conviction, death, citizenship, or that a person is not who he or she represents himself or herself to be.

The bill would make the following changes regarding the conduct of an election:

- Reduce the number of early one-stop voting days for primaries, second primaries, and runoff elections, from 17 days to ten days, and set the number of early one-stop voting days for congressional vacancies, special elections, and municipal elections (if early voting is authorized by the municipality) at ten days. **(Section 3.1)**
- Allow ballots cast during early one-stop voting to be challenged no later than 5:00 P.M. on the fifth business day after the election. **(Section 3.2)**
- Require the State Auditor to conduct post-election audits of election system and controls after each general election, authorize election officials to be present during the audit, and require the State Auditor to produce annual reports of the audits conducted and make them accessible on the Office of the State Auditor's website in perpetuity. **(Section 3.3)**

Campaign Finance: Candidates for office are required to file reports for certain contributions, loans, and expenditures unless a candidate does not receive more than \$1,000 in contributions and loans and does not spend more than \$1,000. Generally, the treasurer must also include certain information in required reports, including the name, address, and principal occupation of all contributors or payees. However, if an individual contributes \$50 or less within specified time frames, the report is not required to include the name, address, or principal occupation of that individual. Any monetary contribution in excess of \$50 and any expenditure for nonmedia expenses of more than \$50 must be made by a form of verifiable payment.

The purchase price of goods or services sold by a political party executive committee or an affiliated party committee is not considered a campaign contribution, in that these are not subject to the account-keeping or reporting requirements required for campaign contributions and are not subject to the limit on campaign contributions.

With respect to independent expenditures, an individual or entity making an independent expenditure who is not otherwise required to file a report, but who makes an independent expenditure in excess of \$100, must file a statement of the independent expenditure with the appropriate board of elections.

The bill would make the following changes to campaign finance reporting requirements:

- Increase the reporting thresholds as follows:
 - For nonmedia expenditures and monetary contributions to be made with a verifiable form of payment: from \$50 to \$100. **(Section 4.1)**
 - For candidates for county office, municipal office, local school board office, soil and water conservation district board of supervisors, or sanitary district board with contributions, loans, and expenditures to be exempted from reporting requirements: from \$1,000 to \$5,000. **(Section 4.2)**
 - For when independent expenditures must be reported: from \$100 to \$1,000. **(Section 4.3)**
 - For when 48-hour reports are required: from \$1,000 to \$2,000. **(Section 4.4)**
- Provide that the exemption for campaign sales would include political party committees, which would be defined as a political party executive committee or any group established by a political

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party including men, women, college, teen, senior, young, African American, and Hispanic clubs or organizations. (**Section 4.5**)

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027.