

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 3819

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 27, 2022

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 3819 (2R).

This bill adds a circumstance for which a voter may be removed from a permanent vote by mail list and when a voter's preference for where their ballot is sent may be changed. The bill would remove a voter from a permanent vote by mail status after a voter opted in if the voter does not vote by mail for four consecutive years beginning with the 2020 election cycle. The bill specifies that the voter will no longer automatically receive a mail-in ballot. The bill specifies a voter will be notified in writing of their change in status after the fourth consecutive year in which they have not voted by mail.

Under current law, a voter will continue to receive a mail-in ballot after opting to receive one for all future elections, until they notify otherwise in writing.

A person will remain a registered voter under the bill. The provisions of the bill may remove a voter from permanent vote by mail status, not the voter roll.

The bill also specifies that for a voter who chooses to have their mail-in ballot sent to an address other than the address for which they are registered to vote, the ballot will be sent to the address for which they are registered to vote if the ballot is returned or undeliverable after two consecutive general elections. The bill requires a voter to be notified in writing after the second consecutive general election when the ballot was returned or undeliverable of the change in where their ballot will be sent.

The bill also appropriates \$5 million for the purposes of providing grants to counties to undertake a public education campaign to notify voters of the changes to mail-in ballot procedures set forth in this bill.

As amended and reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 3819 (3R) is identical to Senate Bill No 2868 (1R), as also amended and reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to direct the Division of Elections in the Department of State to establish guidelines for the counties to follow for the purposes of carrying out the voter education campaign.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds the bill will result in a one-time \$5 million increase in expenditures for the State to provide grants to counties to undertake a public education campaign to notify voters of potential changes to their vote by mail status and potential changes to where their mail-in ballots are sent. These grant monies, in turn, will constitute a one-time county revenue increase.

The cost to each county to carry out the educational campaign would depend on its implementation decisions, as the bill provides options for conducting the educational campaign that vary in their cost, and the guidelines provided to counties by the Department of State.

The bill will also impact annual county expenditures. When counties remove voters from the permanent vote by mail list, they will realize savings related to the printing and mailing of mail-in ballots. On the other hand, counties will be required to pay the cost of printing and distributing notices to voters who will be subject to a change in their vote by mail status or when notifying them about a change in where their ballot is sent. The net effect on annual county expenditures of these countervailing actions cannot be determined.