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Bill Text: NJ S4069 | 2018-2019 | Regular Session | Introduced
New Jersey Senate Bill 4069

Bill Title: Requires certain voters who filed vote by mail applications from 2016 to 2018 to receive mail-in ballot for all future elections, unless voter requests otherwise; appropriates $2 million.

Spectrum: Partisan Bill (Democrat 13-0)

Status: *(Passed)* 2019-08-28 - Approved P.L.2019, c.265. [S4069 Detail]

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SENATE, No. 4069
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 23, 2019

Sponsored by:
Senator STEPHEN M. SWEENEY
District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

SYNOPSIS

Requires certain voters who filed vote by mail applications from 2016 to 2018 to receive mail-in ballot for all future elections, unless voter requests otherwise; appropriates $2 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT concerning the ability of certain voters to receive a mail-in ballot for all future elections unless they request otherwise, amending P.L.2018, c.72, and making an appropriation.

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

1.   Section 14 of P.L.2018, c.72 (C.19:63-3.1) is amended to read as follows:

14.   a.   The clerk of each county shall add to the list of registered voters receiving a mail-in ballot for all future elections without further request each voter in the county who requested and received a mail-in ballot for the 2016 general election, and each voter who requested and received a mail-in ballot for any election in 2017 and 2018 by filing a mail-in ballot application following the deadline for applying for a 2016 general election mail-in ballot. Each voter so added to the list shall have the option to inform the clerk in writing that the voter does not wish to receive a mail-in ballot automatically for all future elections.

b.   The county clerks shall transmit to each voter who will automatically receive such a ballot for all future elections pursuant to subsection a. of this section a notice informing the voter that he or she will automatically receive a mail-in ballot for all future elections unless the voter informs the clerk in writing that he or she does not wish to receive a mail-in ballot for all future elections.
(cf: P.L.2018, c.72, s.14)

2.   a. The Department of State shall reimburse each county for the actual costs incurred by the county in implementing the provisions of this act.

  b.   On or before January 1, 2020, the clerk of each county shall certify to the Department of State, in a manner prescribed by the department, the total cost incurred by the county in implementing the provisions of this act.

3.   There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of State the sum of $2 million to be distributed among the counties subject to the requirements of section 1 of this act as reimbursement for the costs of implementing the provisions of this act.

4.   This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

Under current law, persons wishing to vote by mail may file an application to receive a mail-in ballot either for all future elections or for any single election. Pursuant to P.L.2018, c.72, these two choices were adopted to simplify the vote-by-mail application, consolidating prior categories of elections for voting by mail. The law required the county clerks to add to the list of registered voters receiving a mail-in ballot for all future elections without further request each voter in the county who requested and received a mail-in ballot for the 2016 general election. However, the law was silent on interim applications to vote by mail filed in 2016, 2017, and 2018, before the change in the vote-by-mail application became effective on August 10, 2018.

Nevertheless, the Legislature intended to include such applicants. This did not occur due to the delay in enactment.

This bill requires that any voter who requested and received a mail-in ballot for any election in 2017 and 2018 by filing a mail-in ballot application following the deadline for applying for a 2016 general election mail-in ballot would also be added to the list of registered voters receiving a mail-in ballot for all future elections without further request from the voter. Under current law, voters have the option to opt out of the vote-by-mail process by notifying their county clerk.

The bill appropriates $2 million for implementation costs.