

Elections Refresher

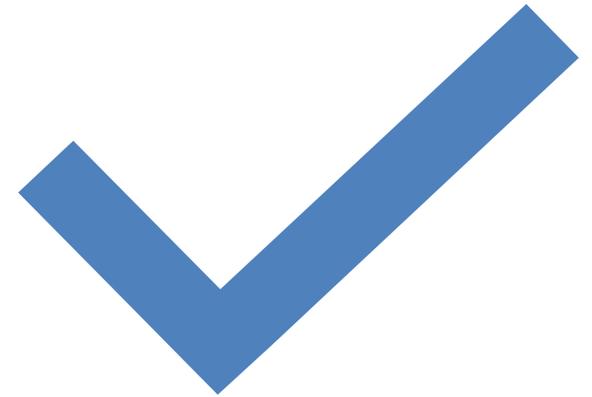
New Laws and Pending Bills
NJ League of Municipalities
Mini Conference

June 18, 2025

3:10 PM – 4:50 PM

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Email: kwhite@eastampton.com



NEW LAWS – 2025 UPDATES

P.L. 2025, c. 32 – Ballot Design and Procedures

This law was enacted
in response to
litigation over ballot
bracketing practices
and aims to ensure
fairness and clarity in
**New Jersey primary
election ballots.**

- Office-block ballot format for primary elections. Grouping candidates by the office they're seeking, rather than by organizational "brackets."
- 6-word limit on slogans; rejection allowed for misleading slogans
- State Committee members now elected by county committee, not directly by voters in the primary.
- No changes after ballot draw
- Effective March 6, 2025

P.L. 2025, c. 23 – Early Voting Period Extended

Non-presidential: early voting begins 7
days before election (was 4 days)



Presidential: early voting starts 7 days
prior (was 6 days)



\$6M in state aid for early voting costs



Effective March 4, 2025



P.L. 2025, c. 20 – Petition Signature Requirements

New sliding scale based on population



School Board petitions increased from
10 to 25 signatures



Petition forms to be published by
January 1 by Secretary of State



Effective Feb 3, 2025 (retroactive to
Jan 1, 2025)

Sliding Scale for Political Party Municipal Petitions:

Population Range	Signature Requirement
Over 50,000	At least 100 voters
25,000 – 50,000	At least 75 voters
10,000 – 25,000	At least 50 voters
5,000 – 10,000	Lesser of 25 voters or 5% of General Assembly Primary votes
2,500 – 5,000	Lesser of 10 voters or 5%
Up to 2,500	Lesser of 5 voters or 5%
Single Election District	Lesser of 10 voters or 5%

- Signature requirements are now based on **municipal population** (as per the most recent federal Census):

P.L. 2024, c. 107 – Change in 2025 Primary Date

New date: June
10 (moved
from June 3)

Reason:
observance of
Shavuot

Signed into law
December 31,
2024

PENDING BILLS

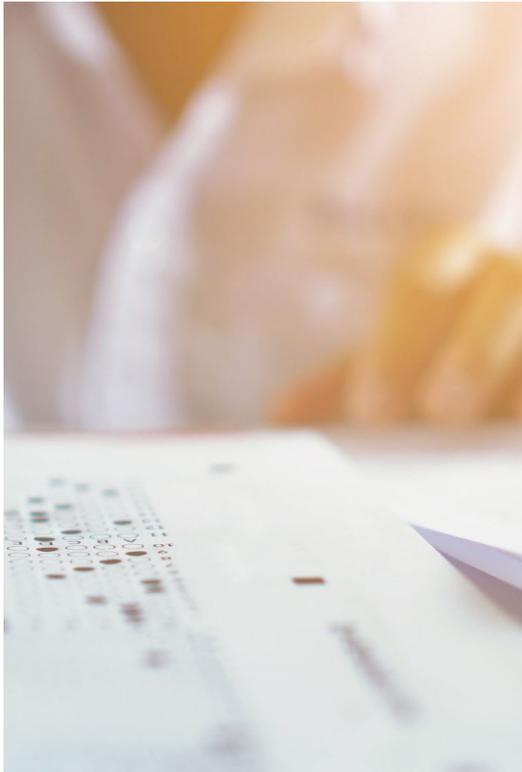
Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____



A-5181 – Rotation of Candidate Names (Pending – referred to the Assembly State and Local Government Committee)



- Rotates names on primary ballots for fairness
- Algorithm-based assignment by district or voter
- Uniform guidelines from Secretary of State
- Referred to Assembly State & Local Gov't Committee



A-5473 – Mail-in Ballots Counted Posthumously

Status: Referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee

Overview

- This bill proposes that mail-in ballots submitted by voters who die after casting their vote should still be counted, provided the ballot was properly submitted in agreement with New Jersey's Vote By Mail Law.
-

A-5473 – Mail-in Ballots Counted Posthumously

Status: Referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee

Mail-in ballots that are mailed, delivered in person, or deposited in a drop box before a voter's death would be counted, unless there are deficiencies unrelated to the voter's death. Final decision by County Board of Elections



Takes effect immediately

S-4099/A-5230 – Automatic Voter Registration

Overview

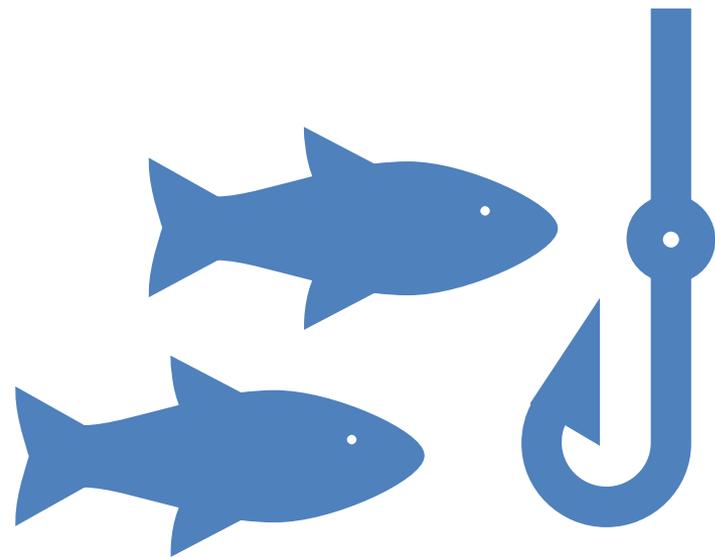
- These companion bills aim to expand automatic voter registration (AVR) beyond the current scope (e.g., Motor Vehicle Commission) to include a broader range of state-issued licenses and permits.



S-4099/A-5230 – Automatic Voter Registration

Voter registration tied to licensing (e.g., Boat licenses, Hunting or fishing licenses, Trapping licenses, Sportsman's licenses, Beaver or wild turkey permits, Deer permits, Firearms purchaser identification cards and permits to carry handguns

Takes effect Jan 1 after enactment



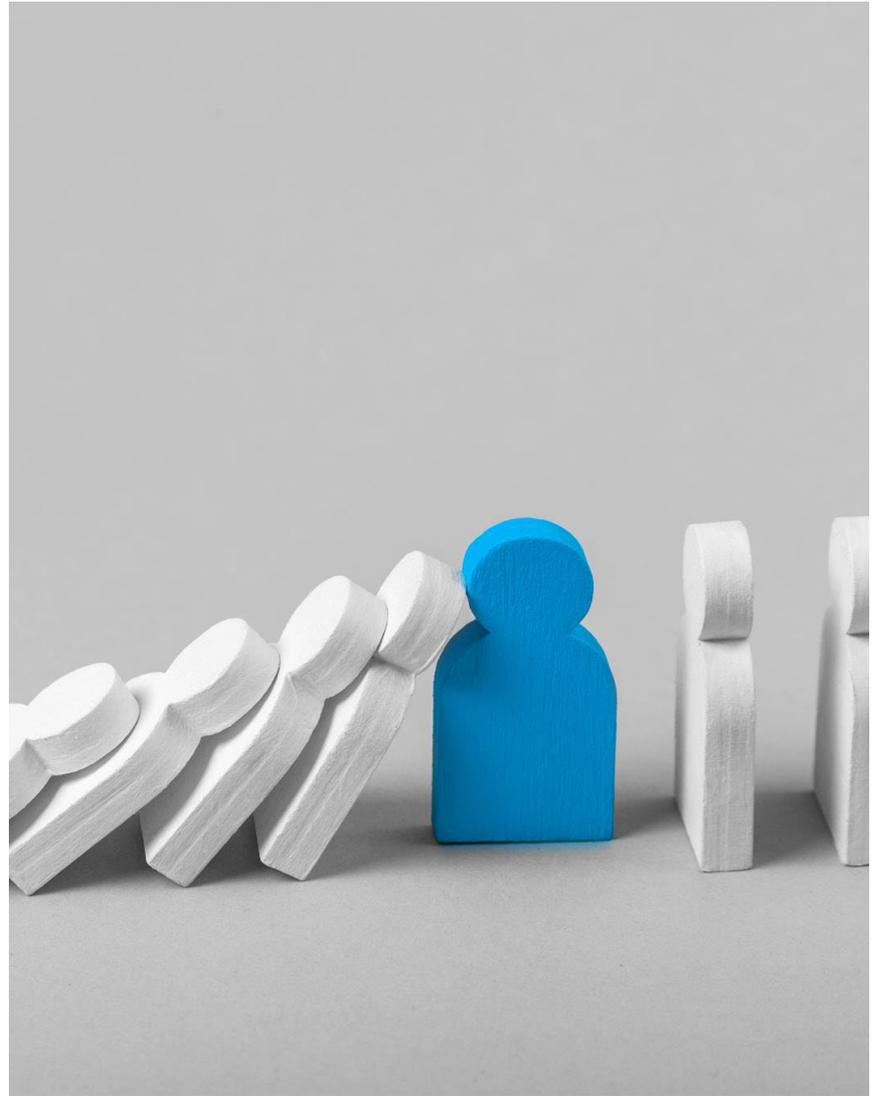
Pending Election Legislation S1631

Introduction of
Ranked-Choice
Voting How it
works and
potential effects on
elections.

S1631 would increase the administrative burden on municipal clerks, requiring changes to election preparation, ballot design, public communication, and training protocols. It promotes greater voter choice but will require substantial planning, funding, and education to implement effectively.

How Ranked-Choice Voting Works

In Ranked-Choice Voting, voters rank candidates in order of preference: first choice, second choice, third choice, and so on. If a candidate receives more than 50% of the first-choice votes, they win outright. If no candidate achieves a majority, the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is eliminated. Voters who selected the eliminated candidate as their first choice will have their votes count for their next preferred candidate. This process continues until a candidate secures a majority.



How does

Ranked choice voting work?

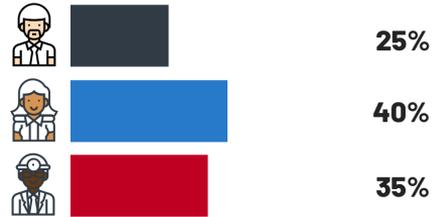


① Voters rank their choices

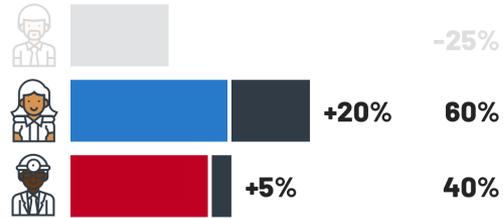
Vote

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

② Voters' 1st choices are counted



③ The losing candidate's votes move to voters' 2nd and 3rd choices



④ New totals reveal a winner (more than 50% of the total vote)



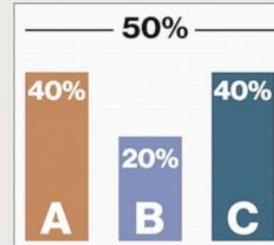
RANKED-CHOICE VOTING

Candidate	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Avery	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bennie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Charlie	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desmond	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

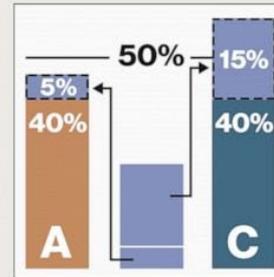
How Ranked Choice Voting Works

If no candidate gets more than 50% of the vote, the count goes into an instant run off.

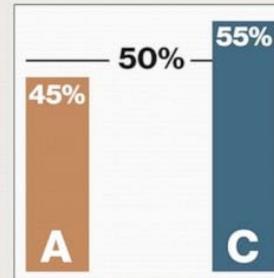
In this scenario, the candidate with the least amount of votes for first choice is eliminated.



The voters who had that candidate as their first choice will then have their vote count for the candidate they marked as their second choice.



The process continues until one candidate gets more than 50% of the votes.



A2818: Regulation of
Deceptive Media
Prohibiting the
dissemination of
deceptive audio or
visual media near
elections.

Purpose: To prohibit the distribution of misleading or manipulated audio and visual content (often created using artificial intelligence or “deepfake” technology) in connection with elections.

The bill likely outlines what qualifies as “deceptive” or “manipulated,” such as: Synthetic media that falsely depicts a candidate saying or doing something they never did. Misleading visuals timed close to Election Day with the intent to influence voter behavior.

How to Vote Using Ranked-Choice Voting:

- Look at the list of candidates.
- Pick your favorite and mark them as your #1 choice.
- Pick your second favorite and mark them as your #2 choice.
- Keep going (if you want) — you can rank as many or as few candidates as you like.

Rank Choice Voting

Example Ballot:

Rank	Candidate
1st Choice	Alex
2nd Choice	Jordan
3rd Choice	Taylor

Why It's Used



It reduces “spoiler” candidates.



It encourages majority winners.



You can vote your heart AND your head — no need to vote “strategically.”

Implications for Municipal Clerks and Elections Officials

Increased public inquiries: Clerks may need to respond to concerns or questions about suspicious media.



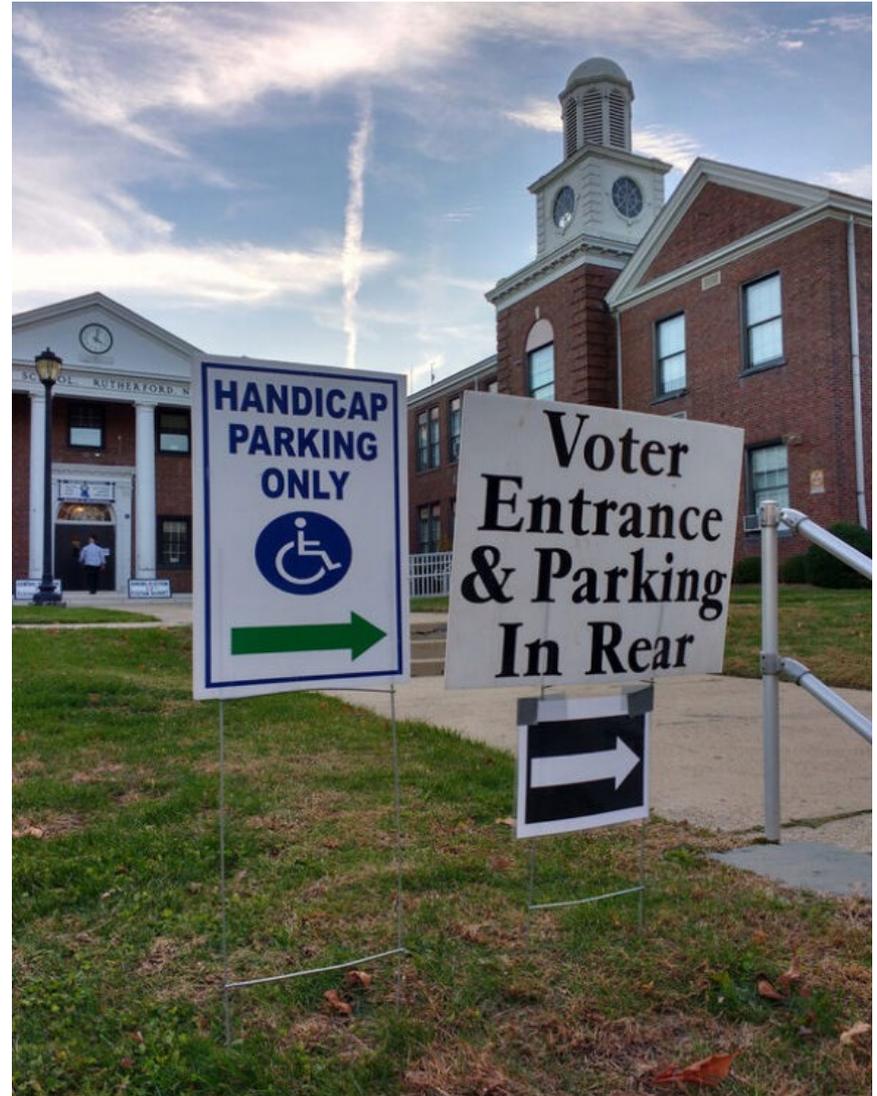
Voter education: Offices may need to assist in communicating what is and isn't credible election content.



Interagency coordination: Election officials may need to work with the Attorney General, Division of Elections, or cybersecurity teams if violations are suspected. This bill is part of a growing national trend to address the threat of AI-generated misinformation in the election space

S2865: The Voter Convenience Act introduced 3.4.24 and is awaiting further action

- Allowing voters to cast ballots at any polling place in their municipality.



S2865: The Voter Convenience Act



Municipal Voting Flexibility: Voters would no longer be restricted to a single, assigned polling location. Instead, they could vote at any polling place within their municipality.



Use of Electronic Poll Books: To facilitate this flexibility, the bill mandates the use of electronic poll books, enabling poll workers to verify voter eligibility and issue the correct ballot regardless of the polling location within the municipality.



County-Wide Implementation Option: The legislation also permits counties to extend this flexibility, allowing voters to cast ballots at designated polling places anywhere within their county, subject to approval by the Secretary of State and county election officials

S2865: The Voter Convenience Act



Poll Worker Training. Election officials would need to ensure poll workers are adequately trained to handle electronic poll books and manage the issuance of correct ballots for voters from any district within the municipality.



Ballot Management. There would be a need for robust systems to manage and distribute various ballot styles corresponding to different districts, ensuring each voter receives the appropriate ballot.



Infrastructure and Technology. Investment in reliable electronic poll book systems and secure networks would be essential to support real-time voter check-ins and prevent instances of double voting.



S2865: The Voter Convenience Act

Benefits to Voters

Using the polling location that's most convenient for them

No longer need to find their district table within their multi-district polling place, or wait in line while other district tables have no line

Can use any open machine, reducing wait times

Highly trained, highly competent pollworkers increase faith in the election process



S2865: The Voter Convenience Act

Benefits to Elections Offices

Flexibility to only send out the amount of equipment needed

Flexibility to hire fewer pollworkers to match the equipment assignments

Fewer pollworkers = Hiring best-of-the-best rather than filling seats

More time and resources for training

Saving \$10s to \$100s of thousands of dollars per year

Using technology to fullest capabilities;
Streamlining the process and getting our money's worth!

No impact on district-level reporting



Misc.

- Many of NJ's election rules are century-old and messy, because new laws have just been layered on top of the old
- The quirky county-line ballot is now gone, replaced by office-block ballots with limited party slogans
- There's a strict ban on political apparel at polling places—active enforcement often leads to awkward situations
- Primary scheduling sometimes clashes with religious observance, sparking calls for reform .

Thank
you!

