

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4778**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

—  
In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)  
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SENATE, June 9, 2020.

The committee on Senate Ways and Means to whom was referred the House Bill relative to voting options in response to COVID-19 (House, No. 4778); reports, recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the text of Senate document numbered 2755. (Operating Costs: \$8,000,000)

For the committee,  
Michael J. Rodrigues

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4778**

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House bill No. 4768, as changed by the House committee on Bills in the Third Reading and as amended (on June 3 and 4) and passed to be engrossed by the House. June 4, 2020.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
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An Act relative to voting options in response to COVID-19.

*Whereas*, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to forthwith provide for increased voting options in response to COVID-19, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health and convenience.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. Subsection (b) of section 25B of chapter 54 of the General Laws, as  
2 appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the last sentence and  
3 inserting in place thereof the following sentence:- No application shall be deemed to be  
4 seasonably filed unless it is received in the office of the city or town clerk or registrars of voters  
5 before 5 P.M. on the seventh day preceding the election.

6           SECTION 2. Said section 25B of said chapter 54, as so appearing, is hereby further  
7 amended by striking out subsection (c) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

8           (c) The voting period for in person early voting shall run from the eleventh business day  
9 preceding the general election until the close of business on the business day preceding the  
10 business day before the election; provided, however, that if the eleventh business day before the

11 election falls on a legal holiday the early voting period shall begin on the first business day prior  
12 to the legal holiday. The voting period for early voting by mail shall begin as soon as all  
13 necessary early voting materials have been received by the local election official pursuant to  
14 subsection (h).

15 SECTION 3. Section 89 of said chapter 54, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
16 striking out the first paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

17 Any form of written communication evidencing a desire to have an absent voting ballot  
18 be sent for use for voting at an election shall be given the same effect as an application made in  
19 the form prescribed by the state secretary. No application for an absent voting ballot to be sent by  
20 mail shall be deemed to be seasonably filed unless it is received in the office of the city or town  
21 clerk or registrars of voters on or before the seventh day preceding the election for which the  
22 ballot is being requested; provided, however, that if the seventh day preceding such election is a  
23 Sunday or a legal holiday, then it shall be received by such clerk or registrars before 5 P.M. on  
24 the last previous day on which such office is open. No application for an absent voting ballot to  
25 be voted in person shall be deemed to be seasonably filed unless it is received in the office of the  
26 city or town clerk or registrars of voters on or before noon on the day preceding the election for  
27 which such absent voting ballot is requested; provided, however, that if the day preceding such  
28 election is a Sunday or legal holiday, then it shall be received by such clerk or registrars before 5  
29 P.M. on the last previous day on which such office is open. An application by a voter admitted to  
30 a health care facility after noon of the seventh day before the relevant election, as provided in  
31 subsection (c) of section 91B, may be received up until the time the polls close.

32 SECTION 4. Section 91B of said chapter 54, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
33 striking out, in line 21, the words “after noon of the fifth” and inserting in place thereof the  
34 following words:- on or after the seventh.

35 SECTION 5. Section 92 of said chapter 54, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
36 striking out, in line 11, the words “eighty-seven, or” and inserting in place thereof the following  
37 words:- 87; via a secured municipal drop box, where provided; or.

38 SECTION 6. (a) As used in sections 6 to 14, inclusive, the following words shall, unless  
39 the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

40 “Application”, an application to vote early by mail.

41 “Central registry”, the central registry of voters established pursuant to section 47C of  
42 chapter 51 of the General Laws.

43 “General election” or “election”, the general election scheduled for November 3, 2020.

44 “Primary election” or “primary”, the primary election scheduled for September 1, 2020.

45 “Qualified voter” or “voter”, a voter qualified pursuant to section 1 of chapter 51 of the  
46 General Laws.

47 “State secretary,” the secretary of the commonwealth.

48 (b) Notwithstanding section 25B of chapter 54 of the General Laws or any other general  
49 or special law to the contrary, there shall be early voting by mail for the primary election and  
50 general election.

51 (c) The election officers and registrars of every city or town shall allow any qualified  
52 voter to cast an early ballot by mail for the primary election and general election and any city or  
53 town election held at the same time.

54 (d)(1) The state secretary shall, no later than July 15, 2020, mail to all registered voters  
55 who registered to vote before July 15 at their residential addresses or mailing addresses if  
56 different from their residential addresses listed in the central registry an application for said voter  
57 to be permitted to vote early by mail for the primary election; provided, however, that the state  
58 secretary shall not be required to send an application to any voter whose previous application for  
59 an absent or early ballot for the primary election or for all elections in calendar year 2020 has  
60 been accepted.

61 (2) The state secretary shall, no later than September 14, 2020, mail to all registered  
62 voters who registered to vote before September 14 at their residential addresses or mailing  
63 addresses if different from their residential addresses listed in the central registry an application  
64 for said voter to be permitted to vote early by mail in the general election; provided, however,  
65 that the state secretary shall not be required to send an application to any voter whose previous  
66 application for an absent or early ballot for the general election or for all elections in calendar  
67 year 2020 has been accepted.

68 (3) (i) The state secretary or the election officers and registrars of every city or town shall  
69 mail to any person registering to vote on or after July 15, 2020 and on or before August 22, 2020,  
70 an application for said voter to be permitted to vote early by mail for the primary election.

71 (ii) The state secretary or the election officers and registrars of every city or town shall  
72 mail to any person registering to vote on or after September 14, 2020 and on or before October

73 24, 2020, an application for said voter to be permitted to vote early by mail for the general  
74 election.

75 (4) The applications required pursuant to this subsection shall be in a form prescribed by  
76 the state secretary in accordance with state and federal law; provided, however, that said  
77 applications shall include: (i) clear instructions for completing and returning the application; and  
78 (ii) an envelope that is addressed to the local election official with postage guaranteed.

79 (5)(i) Each application mailed pursuant to this subsection shall be provided in any  
80 language required by the bilingual election requirements of the federal Voting Rights Act, 52  
81 U.S.C. § 10503.

82 (ii) Each application mailed to a voter in the city of Boston pursuant to this subsection  
83 shall include an option, which shall appear prominently on the application, to request a ballot  
84 printed in any language available at the voter's polling location pursuant to chapter 166 of the  
85 acts of 2014.

86 (6) The applications required pursuant to this subsection shall be made available on the  
87 websites of the state secretary and the election officers and registrars of every city or town.

88 (iii) The state secretary or the election officers and registrars of every city or town shall  
89 mail to any registered voter updating their address on or after July 15, 2020 and on or before  
90 August 22, 2020 an application for said voter to be permitted to vote early by mail for the  
91 primary election.

92 (iv) The state secretary or the election officers and registrars of every city or town shall  
93 mail to any registered voter updating their address on or after September 14, 2020 and on or

94 before October 24, 2020 an application for said voter to be permitted to vote early by mail for the  
95 general election.

96 (e)(1) A voter wishing to vote early by mail in the primary election shall complete the  
97 application to vote early by mail and shall return said application to the appropriate city or town  
98 clerk. Any form of written communication evidencing a desire to have an early voting ballot be  
99 sent for use for voting for the primary election shall be given the same effect as an application  
100 made in the form prescribed by the state secretary. Applications to vote early by mail for the  
101 primary election shall be acceptable if they are signed or submitted electronically.

102 (2) No application to vote early by mail in the primary election shall be deemed to be  
103 seasonably filed unless it is received in the office of the local election official before 5 P.M. on  
104 Friday, August 28, 2020.

105 (f)(1) A voter wishing to vote early by mail in the general election shall complete the  
106 application and shall return said application to the appropriate city or town clerk. Applications to  
107 vote early by mail for the general election shall be acceptable if they are signed or submitted  
108 electronically.

109 (2) No application to vote early by mail in the general election shall be deemed to be  
110 seasonably filed unless it is received in the office of the local election official before 5 P.M. on  
111 Friday, October 30, 2020.

112 (g)(1) Early voting ballots authorized pursuant to this section shall be mailed by the city  
113 or town clerk to voters as soon as such materials are available; provided, however, that said  
114 mailing shall include: (i) instructions for early voting; (ii) instructions for completing the ballot;  
115 (iii) an inner envelope where the ballot is placed after voting which contains an affidavit of

116 compliance to be filled out by the voter; and (iv) an outer envelope that is addressed to the local  
117 election official with postage guaranteed; provided, that a voter who has seasonably filed an  
118 application may receive an early voting ballot in person at the office of the city or town clerk.

119 (2) Each early voting ballot authorized pursuant to this section shall be provided to the  
120 voter in the language required pursuant to paragraph (5) of subsection (d); provided, that if the  
121 voter did not select a language, the ballot shall be provided in English.

122 (h)(1) A voter in receipt of an early voting ballot for the primary election pursuant to this  
123 section may complete and return the ballot by: (i) delivering it in person to the office of the  
124 appropriate city or town clerk; (ii) dropping it in a secured municipal drop box; or (iii) mailing it  
125 to the appropriate city or town clerk.

126 (2) A voter in receipt of an early voting ballot for the general election pursuant to this  
127 section may complete and return the ballot by: (i) delivering it in person to the office of the  
128 appropriate city or town clerk; (ii) dropping it in a secured municipal drop box; or (iii) mailing it  
129 to the appropriate city or town clerk.

130 (3) All early voting ballots submitted by mail, delivered in person to the office of the city  
131 or town clerk or returned to a secured municipal drop box as provided by this section shall be  
132 received by the city or town clerk before the hour fixed for closing the polls on the day of the  
133 primary election or general election; provided, however, that an early voting ballot cast for the  
134 general election that is returned by mail and postmarked not later than November 3, 2020 shall  
135 be received by the city or town clerk by 5 P.M. on Friday, November 6, 2020.

136 (i) A voter wishing to apply to vote early by mail in the primary and/or general election  
137 and needs accommodation may request such accommodation from the secretary of state. Upon

138 receiving information from the voter pursuant to the application in this section either by phone or  
139 electronically, the secretary of state shall grant accommodations to the voter. Accommodations  
140 shall include, but are not limited to, clear and electronic instructions for completion and returning  
141 of the ballot, an authorized blank electronic ballot that can be filled out electronically and  
142 printed, an envelope to return the ballot to the voters town or city clerk, and hole punched  
143 markers where a wet signature is required for certification. Upon printing the ballot the voter  
144 shall place the ballot in the envelope provided by the secretary of state. A voter with  
145 accommodations in receipt of an early voting ballot for the primary and or general election  
146 pursuant to this section may complete and return the ballot by: (i) delivering it in person to the  
147 office of the appropriate city or town clerk; (ii) dropping it in a secured municipal drop box; or  
148 (iii) mailing it to the appropriate city or town clerk.

149 SECTION 7. (a) Notwithstanding section 25B of chapter 54 of the General Laws or any  
150 other general or special law to the contrary, there shall be early voting in person for the primary  
151 election and the general election.

152 (b)(1) The election officers and registrars of every city or town shall allow any qualified  
153 voter to cast an early ballot in person for the primary election during the early voting period,  
154 which shall begin on Saturday, August 22, 2020 and end on Friday, August 28, 2020. Early  
155 voting in person shall also apply to any city or town election held at the same time.

156 (2) The election officers and registrars of every city or town shall allow any qualified  
157 voter to cast a ballot in person for the general election during the early voting period, which shall  
158 begin on Saturday, October 17, 2020 and end on Friday, October 30, 2020. Early voting in  
159 person shall also apply to any city or town election held at the same time.

160 (3) Any qualified voter wishing to vote early in person in the primary or general election  
161 may do so at the time, manner and location prescribed in this section.

162 (c)(1) Early voting in person for the primary election shall be conducted on Saturday,  
163 August 22, 2020 and Sunday, August 23, 2020, as follows: (i) for municipalities with fewer than  
164 5,000 registered voters, for a period of a minimum of 2 hours each day; (ii) for municipalities  
165 with 5,000 or more registered voters but fewer than 20,000 registered voters, for a period of a  
166 minimum of 4 hours each day; (iii) for municipalities with 20,000 or more registered voters but  
167 fewer than 40,000 registered voters, for a period of a minimum of 5 hours each day; (iv) for  
168 municipalities with 40,000 or more registered voters but fewer than 75,000 registered voters, for  
169 a period of a minimum of 6 hours each day; and (v) for municipalities with 75,000 or more  
170 registered voters, for a period of a minimum of 8 hours each day. For each other day during the  
171 early voting period, early voting shall be conducted during the usual business hours of each city  
172 or town clerk. A city or town may, in its discretion, provide for additional early voting hours  
173 beyond the hours required by this paragraph.

174 (2) Early voting for the general election shall be conducted on Saturday, October 17,  
175 2020, Sunday, October 18, 2020, Saturday, October 24, 2020 and Sunday, October 25, 2020 as  
176 follows: (i) for municipalities with fewer than 5,000 registered voters, for a period of a minimum  
177 of 2 hours each day; (ii) for municipalities with 5,000 or more registered voters but fewer than  
178 20,000 registered voters, for a period of a minimum of 4 hours each day; (iii) for municipalities  
179 with 20,000 or more registered voters but fewer than 40,000 registered voters, for a period of a  
180 minimum of 5 hours each day; (iv) for municipalities with 40,000 or more registered voters but  
181 fewer than 75,000 registered voters, for a period of a minimum of 6 hours each day; and (v) for  
182 municipalities with 75,000 or more registered voters, for a period of a minimum of 8 hours each

183 day. For each other day during the early voting period, early voting shall be conducted during the  
184 usual business hours of each city or town clerk. A city or town may, in its discretion, provide for  
185 additional early voting hours beyond the hours required by this paragraph.

186 (d)(1) Each city and town shall establish an early voting site for the primary election and  
187 an early voting site for the general election that shall include the election office for the city or  
188 town; provided, however, that if the city or town determines that the office is unavailable or  
189 unsuitable for early voting in either the primary election or general election, the registrars of each  
190 city or town shall identify and provide for an alternative centrally-located, suitable and  
191 convenient public building within that city or town as an early voting site. A city or town may  
192 also provide for additional early voting sites for the primary election or general election at the  
193 discretion of the registrars for that city or town. Each early voting site shall be accessible to  
194 persons with disabilities.

195 (2) The designation of early voting sites for the primary election shall be made no later  
196 than August 7, 2020. No later than August 14, 2020, and at least once during the voting period,  
197 the registrars for each city or town shall post the location of the early voting sites as well as the  
198 applicable dates and hours. Notice shall be conspicuously posted: (i) in the office of the city or  
199 town clerk or on the principal official bulletin board of each city or town; (ii) on any other public  
200 building considered necessary; (iii) on the city or town's website, if any; and (iv) on the website  
201 of the state secretary.

202 (3) The designation of early voting sites for the general election shall be made no later  
203 than October 2, 2020. No later than October 9, 2020, and at least once during the voting period,  
204 the registrars for each city or town shall post the location of the early voting sites as well as the

205 applicable dates and hours. Notice shall be conspicuously posted: (i) in the office of the city or  
206 town clerk or on the principal official bulletin board of each city or town; (ii) on any other public  
207 building considered necessary; (iii) on the city or town’s website, if any; and (iv) on the website  
208 of the state secretary.

209 (e) A qualified voter voting early in person shall be provided with a ballot and an  
210 envelope where the ballot is placed after voting which contains an affidavit of compliance to be  
211 filled out by the voter. A qualified voter voting early in person shall complete an affidavit under  
212 the regulations promulgated pursuant to this act, which shall include a notice of penalties under  
213 section 26 of chapter 56 of the General Laws.

214 (f) Prior to the beginning of early voting, the registrars for each city or town shall prepare  
215 a list for the early voting sites, containing the names and residences of all persons qualified to  
216 vote at each voting site, as the names and residences appear upon the annual register, and shall  
217 reasonably transmit the applicable list to the election officers at each early voting site designated  
218 by the registrars.

219 (g) The registrar or presiding official at the early voting site shall cause to be placed on  
220 the voting lists opposite the name of a qualified voter who participates in early voting the letters  
221 “EV” designating an early voter.

222 (h) The registrars shall prepare lists of all voters casting ballots pursuant to this section or  
223 section 6 during the early voting period and update the voter list in a manner prescribed by the  
224 state secretary.

225 (i) A city or town may opt to detail a sufficient number of police officers or constables  
226 for each early voting site for the primary election at the expense of the city or town to preserve

227 order, protect the election officers and supervisors from any interference with their duties and aid  
228 in enforcing the laws relating to elections.

229 (j) No early voting ballot cast under this section or section 6 shall be counted if the  
230 officer charged with the duty of counting the ballot is cognizant of the fact that the voter has died  
231 prior to the opening of the polls on the day of the primary or general elections, or in the case of  
232 ballots that are processed pursuant to subsection (k), prior to depositing such ballot into a  
233 tabulator or a ballot box.

234 (k) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, any absent ballot cast  
235 pursuant to section 86 of chapter 54 of the General Laws or any early voting ballot cast pursuant  
236 to this section or section 6 may be deposited into a tabulator or a ballot box in a municipality or  
237 precinct that uses paper ballots, in advance of the date of the primary or the general election. All  
238 ballots received pursuant to this section or section 6 may be opened in advance of the date of the  
239 primary or the general election, in accordance with regulations promulgated by the state  
240 secretary; provided, that such ballots shall be kept secured, locked and unexamined, and that no  
241 results shall be determined or announced until after the time polls close on the date of the  
242 primary or the general election. Disclosing any such result before such time shall be punished as  
243 a violation of section 14 of said chapter 56. Not later than August 1, 2020, the state secretary  
244 shall promulgate emergency regulations regarding the advance depositing of ballots.

245 SECTION 8. (a) No later than August 3, 2020, the state secretary shall deliver to each  
246 city or town, in quantities as the state secretary determines necessary, the following papers: (i)  
247 official absentee and early voting ballots for the primary election, similar to the official ballot to  
248 be used at the primary election; provided, that a sufficient quantity of such ballots are printed in

249 the languages necessary to accommodate the selection of a bilingual ballot by voters pursuant to  
250 paragraph 5 of subsection (d) of section 6; (ii) envelopes of sufficient size to contain the ballots  
251 specified in clause (i) bearing on their reverse the voter's affidavit in compliance with the  
252 requirements of subsection (j) of section 25B of chapter 54 of the General Laws; (iii) return  
253 envelopes for any ballot requested for voting by mail pre-addressed to the local election official  
254 with postage guaranteed; and (iv) instructions for voting by mail to be sent to each voter who  
255 requests to cast a ballot by mail.

256 (b) No later than October 9, 2020, the state secretary shall deliver to each city or town, in  
257 quantities as the state secretary determines necessary, the following papers: (i) official absentee  
258 and early voting ballots, for the general election, similar to the official ballot to be used at the  
259 general election; provided, that a sufficient quantity of such ballots are printed in the languages  
260 necessary to accommodate the selection of a bilingual ballot by voters pursuant to paragraph 5 of  
261 subsection (d) of section 6; (ii) envelopes of sufficient size to contain the ballots specified in  
262 clause (i) bearing on their reverse the voter's affidavit in compliance with the requirements of  
263 subsection (j) of said section 25B of said chapter 54; (iii) return envelopes for any ballot  
264 requested for voting by mail pre-addressed to the local election official with postage guaranteed;  
265 and (iv) instructions for voting by mail to be sent to each voter who requests to cast a ballot by  
266 mail.

267 SECTION 9. (a) Sections 37 and 38 of chapter 53 of the General Laws shall apply to  
268 unenrolled voters and voters enrolled in political designations voting early in the primary  
269 election. The registrar or presiding official at the early voting site shall cause the name of the  
270 party of the ballot being voted to be recorded on the voting list. Once the party selection has been  
271 recorded on the voting list, a voter cannot request or vote on the ballot of another party.

272 (b) The counting of early voting ballots including, but not limited to, informing election  
273 officers and any challengers present under section 85A of chapter 54 of the General Laws shall  
274 be set by 950 C.M.R. § 47.00, so far as applicable. All envelopes referred to in this section shall  
275 be retained with the ballots cast at the primary election and shall be preserved and destroyed in  
276 the manner provided by law for the retention, preservation or destruction of official ballots.

277 (c) The provisions of 950 C.M.R. § 47.00 shall apply to early voting at the primary  
278 election to the extent feasible; provided, however, that the state secretary shall promulgate rules  
279 to accommodate the dates set forth herein.

280 SECTION 10. Notwithstanding section 25B of chapter 54 of the General Laws or any  
281 other general or special law to the contrary, the election officers and registrars of every city or  
282 town shall allow any qualified voter to vote early by mail for any city or town election held on or  
283 before December 31, 2020.

284 SECTION 11. Notwithstanding section 24 of chapter 54 of the General Laws or any other  
285 general or special law to the contrary, the select board, board of selectmen, town council or city  
286 council may vote to change any polling place to be used at the primary election or the general  
287 election at least 15 days prior to the date of the primary election or general election if it is  
288 determined that the public convenience or public health would be better served. If the select  
289 board, board of selectmen, town council or city council determines that the public convenience  
290 or public health would be better served, they may house all polling places in a single building  
291 within the municipality, if such building is suitably equipped. In cities, the city council may  
292 designate polling places in non-adjacent precincts if they determine the public convenience or  
293 public health would be better served. In making a decision to change a polling place, the select

294 board, board of selectmen, town council or city council shall evaluate and report on whether such  
295 change would have a disparate impact on access to the polling place on the basis of race, national  
296 origin, disability, income or age, and no later than 3 days prior to changing a polling place, shall  
297 make publically available on its website and at the office of the town or city clerk a report on its  
298 evaluation. When the polling places have been designated pursuant to this section, the board of  
299 registrars shall post on the municipal website and at other such places as it may determine, a  
300 description of the polling places and shall notify voters by using an electronic means, to the  
301 extent available, such as via email or reverse 911 call.

302 SECTION 12. Notwithstanding section 29 of chapter 53 of the General Laws and  
303 sections 11, 11B, 12 and 13 of chapter 54 of the General Laws or any other general or special  
304 law to the contrary, for the primary election and general election, if there is a deficiency in the  
305 number of required election officers, the appointing authority may appoint election officers  
306 without regard to political party membership, voter status, residence in the city or town or  
307 inclusion on a list filed by a political party committee pursuant to said sections 11B and 12 of  
308 said chapter 54. If the position of the warden, clerk or inspector, or the deputy of any such  
309 officer, if any, is vacant within the 3 weeks preceding the primary or general election, the city or  
310 town clerk may appoint a person to fill the vacancy with a competent person willing to serve and  
311 without regard to political party membership, voter status, residence in the city or town or  
312 inclusion on a list filed by a political party committee pursuant to said sections 11B and 12 of  
313 said chapter 54.

314 SECTION 13. Notwithstanding sections 67 and 83 of chapter 54 of the General Laws or  
315 any other general or special law to the contrary, for the primary election and general election, the  
316 city or town clerk may eliminate the requirement that a voter provide their name or residence to

317 an election officer at the ballot box and that the election officer mark the name off a voting list  
318 before the voter may deposit the ballot in the ballot box.

319 SECTION 14. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the state  
320 secretary, in consultation with the registry of motor vehicles, shall implement a system to allow a  
321 qualified voter to request an early or absentee ballot on the secretary of state's website, to be  
322 mailed to the qualified voter's home address or, at the qualified voter's request, to receive at the  
323 office of the town or city clerk. No later than August 15, 2020, the state secretary shall submit to  
324 the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on election laws a report detailing the efforts  
325 taken and progress made on the implementation of such system for qualified voters.

326 SECTION 15. For an election held on or before December 31, 2020, any person taking  
327 precaution related to COVID-19 in response to a declared state of emergency or from guidance  
328 from a medical professional, local or state health official or any civil authority shall be deemed  
329 to be unable by reason of physical disability to cast their vote in person at a polling location.

330 SECTION 16. Notwithstanding sections 25B and 89 of chapter 54 of the General Laws or  
331 any other general or special law to the contrary, applications for early and absentee ballots for all  
332 elections held on or before December 31, 2020 shall be acceptable if they are signed or  
333 submitted electronically; provided, that any electronic signature shall be written in substantially  
334 the same manner as a handwritten signature.

335 SECTION 17. Notwithstanding any other general or special law to the contrary,  
336 subsection (c) of section 91B of chapter 54 of the General Laws shall apply to voters who have  
337 been instructed by a medical professional or a local or state health official to self-quarantine in

338 their home beginning after noon on the seventh day before the any election held on or before  
339 December 31, 2020.

340 SECTION 17A. Notwithstanding sections 26 and 28 of chapter 51 of the General Laws  
341 or any other general or special law to the contrary, the last day to register to vote for any election  
342 taking place on or before December 31, 2020 shall be 10 days before the date of such election;  
343 provided, that the board of registrars shall hold a registration session on that date not less than  
344 from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. and from 7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. The voting list to be used for any  
345 such election shall include all eligible voters registered as of that date.

346 SECTION 18. The state secretary shall promulgate emergency regulations for the  
347 administration and enforcement of this act including, after consulting with the commissioner of  
348 the department of public health, regulations requiring public health safeguards at early voting  
349 sites and polling places, including required distancing of voters and election officers, frequent  
350 use of sanitizers, appropriate clothing and use of marking pens.

351 SECTION 19. Not later than July 15, 2020, the state secretary shall (a) promulgate  
352 regulations for electronic poll books required by section 33I of chapter 54 of the General Laws;  
353 and (b) certify one or more types of electronic poll books in time to be used in the 2020 state  
354 primary and the general elections, and all future elections, under said section 33I of said chapter  
355 54.