

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ELECTION LAWS

2025-2026 (194th) BILL SUMMARY

Bill Number: H.878

Title: An Act relative to public information requests

Sponsor(s): Rep. Marcus S. Vaughn

Hearing Date: June 17, 2025

Reporting Deadline: 60 days from hearing date

Prior History:

2023-2024 (H.728): Ordered to a House Study

2021-2022 (H.782): Ordered to a House Study

2019-2020 (H.650): Ordered to a House Study

2017-2018 (H.358): Ordered to a House Study

CURRENT LAW: Section 55. Registrars shall, from the names entered in the annual register and from the names maintained on the inactive voters list, prepare voting lists for use at elections; provided, however, that such registrars shall not enter the names of women voters in separate columns or lists. In such voting lists, such registrars shall place the names of all voters entered on the annual register and those maintained on the inactive voters list and opposite to the name of each his residence and party enrollment. The registrars shall maintain separate voting lists for active and inactive voters or one voting list if inactive voters are designated as such on the voting list. In cities they shall prepare such voting lists by wards, and if a ward or town is divided into voting precincts, they shall prepare the same by precincts. In all such cities and in towns having five thousand or more inhabitants, the voting lists shall be arranged by streets in alphabetical order, and the names of the voters on each street shall be arranged in the numerical order of the street numbers of their residences, so far as possible. All first voting lists shall be printed and available for public distribution not later than the first day of July in state election years. A sufficient number of voting lists shall be printed so that they can be furnished free of charge, upon request, to all duly organized political committees, and to all political candidates for public office in the various districts in which the city or town is located and for a reasonable fee, not to exceed the cost of printing such list, to any person upon request. Names shall be added thereto or taken therefrom as persons are found to be qualified or not qualified to vote. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the voting lists to be used at presidential primaries or any primary or election held prior to July first in any year may be that of the year preceding, revised as aforesaid.

SUMMARY: This legislation states that registrars provide the state secretary with copies of various voter lists, including regular, absentee, and specially qualified voter lists. These lists will be considered public records, accessible upon request, and governed by the provisions of Chapter 66. The state secretary will be responsible for responding to requests for regional or statewide copies of these lists.