

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON ELECTION LAWS**  
**2025-2026 (194<sup>th</sup>) BILL SUMMARY**

**Bill Number:** H.837

**Title:** *An Act relative to election ballots*

**Sponsor(s):** Rep. Richard Haggerty (*Woburn*)

**Hearing Date:** June 17, 2025

**Reporting Deadline:** August 16, 2025

**Prior History:** 2023-24 (H.691); Ordered to study  
2021-22 (H.796); Ordered to study

**Similar Matters:** N/A

**CURRENT LAW:**

*M.G.L. c. 54 § 25(b)(h) – Early voting; application for early voting ballots; early voting period, sites and lists; counting of early voting ballots:* Requires the Secretary of the Commonwealth to send official early voting ballots to each city or town at least 21 days before every biennial state election. The ballots must be similar to the ones used on election day and provided in quantities determined necessary by the secretary.

*M.G.L. c. 54 § 87(a) – Preparation of absent voting ballots, envelopes, instructions:* Requires the Secretary of the Commonwealth prepare official absentee voting ballots before each biennial state election. These ballots must be similar to the official election day ballots but printed on differently colored paper to distinguish them.

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires that early voting and absentee ballots be identical in all respects to the official ballots, rather than simply similar.