



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
State of Connecticut
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MARK F. KOHLER
Secretary of the State

SCOTT D. BATES
Deputy Secretary of the State

To: Government Administration and Elections Committee
From: Office of the Secretary of the State
Re: Suspension of Supervised Absentee Balloting
Date: July 14, 2022

This report is filed with the Committee pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §9-159q. We have reproduced the relevant portion of that section below:

(l) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, the Secretary of the State may suspend the supervision of absentee balloting under this section and section 9-159r, provided the Secretary (1) suspends such supervision of absentee balloting in recognition of a declaration by the Governor of a civil preparedness emergency, pursuant to section 28-9, or a public health emergency, pursuant to section 19a-131, and (2) **submits a report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections advising of such suspension and specifying alternative actions to be taken to provide opportunities for absentee voting by electors described in this section and section 9-159r.**

On June 28, 2022 Governor Ned Lamont issue a **Declaration of a Continued Public Health Emergency**. In the declaration the Governor stated:

Given the continued harmful impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure that the State can exercise all authorities to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Connecticut citizens, pursuant to Section 19a-131a of the Connecticut General Statutes, I declare that after June 30, 2022, a public health emergency continues to exist throughout all counties of the State of Connecticut.,,

[But] despite these great strides, Connecticut continues to experience significant intermittent surges of COVID-19 infections and transmission as new variants of the virus emerge, including the BA.2 Omicron variant...

The Commissioner of Public Health, under her authority in section 19a-2a of the General Statutes to employ the most efficient and practical means for the prevention and suppression of disease, in coordination with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, and Commissioners of Emergency Services and Public Protection and Housing shall take all steps as they deem necessary, including issuing and continuing directives, guidance memoranda, or orders, both to arrange non-congregate housing with sufficient physical distancing capacity for people who, from the nature of their existing housing, are at increased risk of exposure to, infection with, or transmission of COVID-19 and to apply for and receive federal assistance to cover the same...

Given that the Governor issued the Declaration of a Continued Public Health Emergency pursuant to “Section 19a-131a of the Connecticut General Statutes” our office has the authority to suspend supervised absentee balloting. It is our understanding that nursing homes and other care facilities remain on high alert and continue to experience COVID related infections with 152 cases and 2 deaths



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for the week of July 7, 2022 alone.¹ Given the required interaction between election officials and this vulnerable class during each supervised absentee balloting session and after consultation with local election officials who would be responsible for administering this process, our office has decided to suspend the process for the August 9, 2022 primary under the new authority provided to our office by the legislature pursuant to June Sp. Sess. P.A. 21-2.²

With supervised absentee balloting suspended, it is our instruction to all town clerks to issue absentee ballots by mail to any person who validly applies for such ballot with their office and who lives in a location that would otherwise participate in supervised absentee balloting.

The remaining requirements regarding the receipt, counting and disposition of absentee ballots remains in effect. We will work with the Department of Public Health to ensure that all facilities have notice of this suspension.

¹ <https://data.ct.gov/stories/s/f8wz-xtcy>

² https://cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/CGAbillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=1202&which_year=2021