

SENATE STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR **SENATE, Nos. 1133, 1435 and 2397**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 26, 2005

The Senate State Government Committee reports favorably a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Nos. 1133, 1435 and 2397.

This substitute permits any registered voter who wishes to vote by absentee ballot to do so without being required to provide a reason for not being able to vote in person on the day of an election.

Under current law, an absentee ballot is available to a qualified and registered voter who expects to be absent from the State on the day of any election or who will be within the State on the day of any election but because of illness or physical disability, including blindness or pregnancy, or because of the observance of a religious holiday, or because of resident attendance at a school, college or university, or because of the nature and hours of employment, will be unable to cast a ballot at the polling place in the appropriate election district on the day of the election.

The substitute also provides that: 1) no person who is a candidate in the election for which the voter requests an absentee ballot will be permitted to assist in the completion of the ballot or serve as an authorized messenger; 2) whenever the county clerk forwards by mail a military or civilian absentee ballot, as the case may be, to an absentee ballot voter between the 14th day and the fourth day prior to the day of an election, the ballot must be transmitted, following approval of the application, within two business days of the receipt of the application; 3) the clerk must prepare one list of requests for absentee ballots and another list of the applicants whose applications were approved and sent absentee ballots and the lists must be updated each business day, made available to the public and transmitted to elections officials; and 4) each county board of elections must compile a list of the name and street address of each person who has completed and returned a voted civilian or military absentee ballot and the name and street address of each person who has delivered such a ballot personally to the board. The board must update the list each business day, make it available to the public and transmit it to elections officials.

This substitute is identical to Assembly, No. 35 ACS.