

ASSEMBLY, No. 5165

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 16, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblyman ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

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District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Giblin

SYNOPSIS

Directs Secretary of State to establish grant program for counties to improve paper ballot counting process; appropriates \$10 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/4/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing a grant program for improving the State's vote-
2 by-mail process and making an appropriation.

3
4 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6
7 1. a. The Secretary of State shall establish a temporary program
8 to provide grants to county boards of elections. The purpose of the
9 grant program shall be for improving that county board's paper ballot
10 counting capabilities, including the counting of vote-by-mail and
11 provisional ballots.

12 b. In establishing the grant program pursuant to this section, the
13 Secretary of State shall:

14 (1) survey each county board of elections to collect information
15 regarding procedural and technological problems incurred during the
16 2020 General Election hindering the paper ballot counting process;

17 (2) analyze the results of the survey and develop a plan to address
18 the shortcomings that identifies concrete categories of improvement
19 areas that can be undertaken to improve the vote-by-mail process;

20 (3) develop guidelines and procedures for the submission of grant
21 applications, and criteria for the evaluation of such applications;

22 (4) establish terms and conditions for the awarding of a grant
23 under this section, and monitor grant recipients' compliance with the
24 terms and conditions; and

25 (5) require the recipient of a grant to report to the secretary
26 information relating to its use of grant funds.

27 c. No later than three years after the effective date of this act,
28 the Secretary of State shall submit a written report to the Governor
29 and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the
30 Legislature, on the effectiveness of the grant program in improving
31 paper ballot counting capabilities in the State.

32
33 2. There is appropriated from the State General Fund to the
34 Department of State the sum of \$10,000,000 to effectuate the
35 provisions of this act, P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as
36 this bill).

37
38 3. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire upon
39 the submittal by the secretary of the report required pursuant to
40 subsection c. of section 1 of this act.

41

42

43 STATEMENT

44

45 This bill directs the Secretary of State to establish a temporary
46 grant program for improving the vote-by-mail process in the State.
47 The purpose of the grant program would be for improving a county

1 board's paper ballot counting capabilities, including the counting of
2 vote-by-mail and provisional ballots.

3 Under the bill, in establishing the grant program, the Secretary of
4 State is required to:

5 (1) survey each county board of elections to collect information
6 regarding procedural and technological problems incurred during the
7 2020 General Election hindering the paper ballot counting process;

8 (2) analyze the results of the survey and develop a plan to address
9 the shortcomings that identifies concrete categories of improvement
10 areas that can be undertaken to improve the vote-by-mail process;

11 (3) develop guidelines and procedures for the submission of grant
12 applications, and criteria for the evaluation of such applications;

13 (4) establish terms and conditions for the awarding of a grant
14 under this section, and monitor grant recipients' compliance with the
15 terms and conditions; and

16 (5) require the recipient of a grant to report to the secretary
17 information relating to its use of grant funds.

18 The bill also requires the Secretary of State to submit a written
19 report to the Governor and the Legislature on the effectiveness of the
20 grant program in improving paper ballot counting capabilities in the
21 State.

22 Under the bill, \$10,000,000 is appropriated from the General Fund
23 to the Department of State to effectuate the provisions of the bill.