SENATE, No. 2881

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator PATRICK J. DIEGNAN, JR.
District 18 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Permits voter registration at age 16, under certain conditions.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT concerning voter registration and amending R.S.19:31-5.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. R.S.19:31-5 is amended to read as follows:

19:31-5. **[**Each person, who is at least 17 years of age at the time he or she applies for registration, who resides in the district in which he or she expects to vote, who will be of the age of 18 years or more on or before the first election in which he or she expects to vote, who is a citizen of the United States, and who, if he or she continues to reside in the district until that election, will at the time have fulfilled all the requirements as to length of residence to qualify him or her as a legal voter, shall, unless otherwise disqualified, be entitled to be registered in such district**]** A person who is at least 16 years of age shall be entitled to register to vote if that person is: (1) a citizen of the United States; and (2) a resident of this State who has met all the requirements as to length of residence to qualify as a legal voter. Each such registrant shall be permitted to vote in an election held on or after the registrant's 18th birthday, provided that the registrant has not otherwise been disqualified from voting. Each **[**17-year-old**]** registrant who has not attained 18 years of age shall be designated in the Statewide voter registration system as temporarily ineligible to vote until the registrant's 18th birthday.

Whenever an individual registers by mail after January 1, 2003 to vote for the first time in his or her current county of residence, that individual shall provide either the individual's New Jersey driver's license number or the last four digits of the individual's Social Security Number, or shall submit with the voter registration form a copy of: (1) a current and valid photo identification card; (2) a current utility bill, bank statement, government check or pay check; (3) any other government document that shows the individual's name and current address; or (4) any other identifying document that the **[**Attorney General**]** Secretary of State has determined to be acceptable for this purpose. If the individual does not provide his or her New Jersey driver's license number or Social Security Number information or submit a copy of any one of these documents, either at the time of registration or at any time thereafter prior to attempting to vote, the individual shall be asked for identification when voting for the first time starting at the first election held after January 1, 2004 at which candidates are seeking federal office or thereafter. This requirement shall not apply to any individual entitled to vote by absentee ballot under the "Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act" (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 et seq.) or to any individual who is provided the right to vote other than in person under section 3 of Pub.L.98-435, the "Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act," or any other voter entitled to vote otherwise than in person under any other federal law. This requirement shall also not apply to any individual who registers to vote by appearing in person at any voter registration agency or to any individual whose voter registration form is delivered to the county commissioner of registration or to the **[**Attorney General**]** Secretary of State, as the case may be, through a third party by means other than by mail delivery.

Once registered, the registrant shall not be required to register again in such district as long as he or she resides therein, except when required to do so by the commissioner, because of the loss of or some defect in his or her registration record.

The registrant, when registered as provided in this Title, shall be eligible to vote at any election to be held subsequent to such registration, if he or she shall be a citizen of the United States of the age of 18 years and shall have been a resident of the State for at least 30 days and of the county at least 30 days, when the same is held, subject to any change in his qualifications which may later disqualify him. No registrant shall lose the right to vote, and no registrant's name shall be removed from the registry list of the county in which the person is registered, solely on grounds of the person's failure to vote in one or more elections.

(cf: P.L.2015, c.222, s.1)

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill provides that a person who is at least 16 years of age would be entitled to register to vote if that person is: a) a citizen of the United States; and b) a resident of this State who has met all the requirements as to length of residence to qualify as a legal voter. Each such registrant would be permitted to vote in an election held on or after his or her 18th birthday, provided that the registrant has not otherwise been disqualified from voting. Each registrant who has not attained 18 years of age would be designated in the Statewide voter registration system as temporarily ineligible to vote until the registrant's 18th birthday.