

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2002

Legislative Document

No. 2182

H.P. 1683

House of Representatives, March 19, 2002

An Act to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration System for the State.

Reported by Representative TUTTLE for the Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs pursuant to Joint Order 2001, H.P. 1622.

Millicent M. MacFarland

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND, Clerk

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

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Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1, sub-§6-A is enacted to read:

6-A. Centralized voter registration system. "Centralized voter registration system" means a single electronic information system and database for voter registration information maintained by the Secretary of State and used by all municipal jurisdictions in the State.

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA c. 3, sub-c. VII is enacted to read:

SUBCHAPTER VII

CENTRALIZED VOTER REGISTRATION

§191. Centralized voter registration system implemented

The Secretary of State shall develop and implement a centralized voter registration system. The Secretary of State shall:

1. Pilot program. Develop a centralized voter registration system pilot to include the 10 municipalities with the highest number of registered voters as of the 2000 general election in order to test the information system and data conversion procedures. Additional municipal jurisdictions may be included in the pilot on a voluntary basis and at the discretion of the Secretary of State;

2. Implementation by stages. Develop a plan to implement the centralized voter registration system in stages; and

3. System implemented. Fully implement the centralized voter registration system and database no later than December 31, 2007.

The Secretary of State shall develop informational materials for municipalities and may require municipalities to report on the implementation of the centralized voter registration system and related processes at the local level.

§192. Centralized Voter Registration Advisory Committee

1. Membership. The Centralized Voter Registration Advisory Committee is established to advise the Secretary of State with respect to planning for the centralized voter registration system. The advisory committee consists of 12 members appointed as follows:

2 A. Two municipal election officials, one appointed jointly
3 by the President of the Senate and President Pro Tempore of
4 the Senate and one appointed by the Speaker of the House;

5 B. One representative from the League of Women Voters of
6 Maine, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

7 C. Two members of the public, one from each of the 2
8 political parties with the largest number of members in the
9 Legislature, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

10 D. Two members of the public, one from each of the 2
11 political parties with the largest number of members in the
12 Legislature, appointed jointly by the President of the
13 Senate and President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

14 E. Two representatives of political parties, one from each
15 of the 2 political parties with the largest number of
16 members in the Legislature; one appointed jointly by the
17 President of the Senate and President Pro Tempore of the
18 Senate and one appointed by the Speaker of the House;

19 F. The Director of the Bureau of Information Services
20 within the Department of Administration and Financial
21 Services or the director's designee; and

22 G. Two state election officials, appointed by the Secretary
23 of State.

24 The appointing authorities shall make their appointments as soon
25 as feasible following the effective date of this section.

26 2. Meetings. The Secretary of State shall call the
27 meetings of the Centralized Voter Registration Advisory Committee
28 whenever the Secretary of State determines necessary.

29 3. Compensation. Members of the advisory committee not
30 otherwise compensated by their employers or other entities whom
31 they represent are entitled to receive reimbursement of necessary
32 expenses for their attendance at meetings of the advisory
33 committee.

34 **§193. Funding**

35 The Secretary of State may apply for and accept federal or
36 other funds for the purpose of developing and implementing a
37 centralized voter registration system. If matching funds are
38 required to obtain a grant, the Secretary of State may submit
39 legislation to request necessary funds. Notwithstanding Title 5,
40 section 1587, the Secretary of State may also enter into a
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2 lease-purchase agreement or other similar agreement for the
3 purpose of developing the system.

4 **§194. Rules**

6 The Secretary of State may adopt rules regarding
7 implementation and administration of a centralized voter
8 registration system to determine the pricing, accessibility and
9 availability of information contained in the database and the
10 appropriate use and resale of that information; to establish a
11 plan to implement the system in stages for all municipal
12 jurisdictions; to identify additional system features or voter
13 information to be included in the system or provide for the
14 confidentiality of certain personal information or limitations on
15 the use and distribution of that information; and to establish a
16 system to identify duplicate records, including establishment of
17 a voter identification indicator.

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19 Rules adopted pursuant to this section are major substantive
20 rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II-A.

22 **§195. Report**

24 The Secretary of State shall report annually, by March 1st,
25 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having
26 jurisdiction over voter registration matters on the progress of
27 the implementation of the centralized voter registration system
28 developed pursuant to this subchapter. The report may include
29 suggested legislation necessary to implement or administer the
30 centralized voter registration system. The committee may report
31 out legislation regarding the centralized voter registration
32 system to the Legislature during the First Regular Session of the
33 121st Legislature and any subsequent Legislature.

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36 **FISCAL NOTE**

38 This bill authorizes the Secretary of State to develop a
39 centralized voter registration system by 2007. The total future
40 costs resulting from this bill will be significant. The formula
41 for federal funding has not yet been determined. If a state match
42 is required, the amount of that state match, in the form of
43 General Fund appropriations, can not be determined at this time.

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45 **SUMMARY**

48 This bill defines "centralized voter registration system"
49 and authorizes the Secretary of State to apply for and receive
50 funds for the establishment of a centralized voter registration

2 system. The bill establishes the Centralized Voter Registration
Advisory Committee to assist the Secretary of State and requires
4 the Secretary of State to develop a pilot program to test a
centralized voter registration system and fully implement a
6 centralized voter registration system by December 31, 2007. The
Secretary of State is authorized to adopt rules to implement and
8 administer a centralized voter registration system. Such rules
would be major substantive rules. The Secretary of State is
10 required to report annually to the joint standing committee of
the Legislature having jurisdiction over voter registration
12 matters and may recommend legislation necessary to implement or
administer the centralized voter registration system.