

**SENSE OF THE BOARD RESOLUTION ADVOCATING THAT THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE, DENISE W. MERRILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 145, ABSENTEE VOTING Sec. 9-135**

**WHEREAS, Chapter 145 Sec. 9-135 outlines requirements for Absentee voting eligibility. Misrepresentation prohibited. (a) Any elector eligible to vote at a primary or an election and any person eligible to vote at a referendum may vote by absentee ballot if he or she is unable to appear at his or her polling place during the hours of voting for any of the following reasons: (1) His or her active service with the armed forces of the United States; (2) his or her absence from the town of his or her voting residence during all hours of voting; (3) his or her illness; (4) his or her physical disability; (5) the tenets of his or her religion forbid secular activity on the day of the primary, election or referendum; (6) the required performance of his or her duties as a primary, election or referendum official, including town clerk or registrar of voters or as staff of the clerk or registrar, at a polling place other than his or her own during all hours of voting at such primary, election or referendum; and**

**WHEREAS, First(1<sup>st</sup>) Responders (defined here as members in active service as Police Officers, Firefighters, EMS, Doctors, Nurses, and any Law Enforcement agents that reside and work in Connecticut) may be called upon to work beyond their normally scheduled shift(s) during emergency situations, such as (1) natural occurring weather events such as ( but not limited to) blizzards, hurricanes, earthquakes, flood. (2) Mass casualty events such as (but not limited to) health epidemics/pandemics, train derailments, plane, car crashes, fires, terrorist events. (3) periods of civil unrest/disobedience, rioting; and**

**WHEREAS, First (1<sup>st</sup>) Responders (defined here as members in active service as Police Officers, Firefighters, EMS, Doctors, Nurses, and any Law Enforcement agents that reside and work in Connecticut) provide much needed emergency response to the people of Connecticut; and**

**WHEREAS, By the nature of their professions as Emergency First (1<sup>st</sup>) Responders, he or she may suddenly be unable to appear at his or her polling place during the normal hours of voting; and**

**WHEREAS, Voting is the right and duty of any elector eligible to vote at a primary or an election and any person eligible to vote at a referendum. They should not be restricted or kept from voting because they are unable (due to their position and duty as a First (1<sup>st</sup>) Responder) to physically vote in person if he or she is unable to appear at his or her polling place during the hours of voting due to any emergency situation as referenced (but not limited to) above; and**

**WHEREAS, It would advisable to amend Chapter 145 Absentee Voting to recognize First (1<sup>st</sup>) responders as vital personnel throughout the State of Connecticut; and grant them the same rights and privileges as those with official duties as primary, election or referendum officials; and**

**WHEREAS, Emergencies may occur at any given time, without warning or advanced notice, we request that First (1<sup>st</sup>) Responders (as defined above) who reside and work in Connecticut be granted status of automatically receiving ballot request applications and subsequent ballots no less than 30 days prior to any primary, election or referendum; and**

WHEREAS, We propose the following draft wording be included as a new section to Chapter 145, Sec.9 Absentee Voting.

**DRAFT**

**Chapter 145 Sec. 9-140f. (NEW SECTION PROPOSED DRAFT)**

**Permanent First (1<sup>st</sup>) Responder elector. Status for receipt Ballots**

- (a) Any elector who is an active First (1<sup>st</sup>) Responder (defined here as Police Officers, Firefighters, EMS, Doctors, Nurses, and any Law Enforcement agents) who files an application for an absentee ballot with a certification from their employer, the presumption being that the First (1<sup>st</sup>) responder will be unable to appear in person at such elector's designated polling location, shall be eligible for permanent absentee ballot status and shall receive an absentee ballot for each election, primary or referendum conducted in such elector's municipality for which such elector is eligible to vote.
- (b) Such First (1<sup>st</sup>) responder elector's permanent absentee ballot status shall remain in effect until such elector: (1) Is removed from the official registry list of the municipality, (2) is removed from permanent absentee ballot status pursuant to the provisions of this section, or (3) requests that he or she no longer receive such permanent absentee ballot status.
- (c) The registrars of voters shall send written notice to each such elector with permanent absentee ballot status in January of each year, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of the State, for the purpose of determining if such elector continues to reside at the address indicated on the elector's permanent absentee ballot application. If (1) such written notice is returned as undeliverable, or (2) not later than thirty days after such notice is sent to the elector, the elector fails to return such notice to the registrars of voters, as directed on the form, the elector in question shall be removed from permanent absentee ballot status. If such elector indicates on such notice that the elector no longer resides at such address and the elector's new address is within the same municipality, the registrars of voters shall change the elector's address pursuant to section 9-35 and such elector shall retain permanent absentee ballot status. If the elector indicates on such notice that the elector no longer resides in the municipality, the registrars of voters shall remove such individual from the registry list of the municipality and send such individual an application for voter registration. Failure to return such written notice shall not result in the removal of an elector from the official registry list of the municipality.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE 30TH BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD, HEREBY REQUEST THAT THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE, DENISE W. MERRILL AMEND CHAPTER 145, ABSENTEE VOTING SEC. 9-135 AS SPECIFIED ABOVE.

Approved by the 30th Board of Representatives this \_\_\_\_\_