

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Government Operations to which was referred Senate
3 Bill No. 354 entitled “An act relating to emergency provisions for the
4 operation of government” respectfully reports that it has considered the same
5 and recommends that the House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended
6 by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the
7 following:

8 Sec. 1. ANNUAL TOWN AND SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETINGS IN THE
9 YEAR 2021; AUTHORIZED MEETING FORMATS;
10 AUSTRALIAN BALLOT AUTHORITY FOR MUNICIPAL
11 SPECIAL MEETINGS

12 (a) Annual meetings.

13 (1) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, due to the
14 circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the year 2021, each annual town
15 meeting and each annual town school district meeting shall be held using the
16 Australian ballot system unless, on or before December 31, 2020, the town or
17 school district determines that it will hold its 2021 annual meeting in a manner
18 that is consistent with the State guidance on indoor meetings that is in effect on
19 the date of its determination.

1 (2) If the budget of the town or town school district is rejected at the
2 2021 annual meeting, the vote on the revised budget shall be held using the
3 Australian ballot system.

4 (3) Notwithstanding 17 V.S.A. § 2681(b) or any other provision of law
5 to the contrary, a person shall not be required to collect voter signatures in
6 order to have the person’s name placed on the ballot as a candidate for a local
7 election that is held at the 2021 annual town meeting or 2021 annual town
8 school district meeting.

9 (b) Special meetings. Notwithstanding the provisions of 17 V.S.A.
10 § 2680(a) that require the voters of a municipality to vote to apply the
11 provisions of the Australian ballot system to a special meeting of the
12 municipality or any other provision of law to the contrary, during the COVID-
13 19 state of emergency declared under 20 V.S.A. chapter 1, the legislative body
14 of a municipality may vote to apply the Australian ballot system to an
15 upcoming special meeting not less than 60 days in advance of that meeting if
16 the legislative body determines that it is necessary to do so in order to protect
17 the public health, safety, or welfare due to the circumstances of the state of
18 emergency.

19 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

20 This act shall take effect on passage.

1 and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act
2 relating to the method of holding municipal meetings in the year 2021”

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5 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE