

Reminder of New Nomination Paper and Referendum Filing Deadlines

Municipal clerks should be aware that the Legislature changed the filing deadline for municipal nomination papers from 45 days to 60 days prior to election day (see PL 2017, c. 248, § 9, amending 30-A M.R.S.A. § 2528(4)(C)). The new law became effective November 1, 2017.

The new 60-day filing deadline requires that nomination papers be made available 40 days before the filing deadline, which in most cases will be 100 days prior to the election. This means that municipal clerks will need to make nomination papers available earlier than in the past. For those municipalities with March annual elections, the new 60-day filing deadline may result in the need to make nomination papers available in December.

The new 60-day filing deadline will also apply to referendum questions, whether submitted by the municipal officers (selectmen or councilors) or by voter petition (see 30-A M.R.S.A. § 2528(5)). Note that the new law changes only the statutory filing deadline for nomination papers and referendum questions. There is no change to the requirement that absentee ballots be available at least 30 days prior to election day (see 21-A M.R.S.A. § 752). For municipalities governed by charter, this change may or may not apply, depending on the specific wording of the charter.

For more information on the new time frames for nomination papers see Supplement No. 3 to MMA's *Town Meetings & Elections Manual*, available at www.memun.org.