A bill to be entitled An act relating to vote-by-mail ballots; amending s. 101.62, F.S.; limiting the duration of requests for vote-by-mail ballots to all elections held within a calendar year of a request; amending s. 101.68, F.S.; authorizing the canvassing of vote-by-mail ballots upon the completion of the public preelection testing of automatic tabulating equipment; providing for construction and applicability; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 101.62, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

101.62 Request for vote-by-mail ballots.—

(1)(a) The supervisor shall accept a request for a vote-by-mail ballot from an elector in person or in writing. One request shall be deemed sufficient to receive a vote-by-mail ballot for all elections that are held within a calendar year through the end of the calendar year of the second ensuing regularly scheduled general election, unless the elector or the elector’s designee indicates at the time the request is made the elections for which the elector desires to receive a vote-by-mail ballot. Such request may be considered canceled when any first-class mail sent by the supervisor to the elector is returned as undeliverable.

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 101.68, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
101.68 Canvassing of vote-by-mail ballot.—

(2)(a) The county canvassing board may begin the canvassing of vote-by-mail ballots upon the completion of the public testing of automatic tabulating equipment pursuant to s. 101.5612(2) at 7 a.m. on the 22nd day before the election, but must begin such canvassing by no later than noon on the day following the election. In addition, for any county using electronic tabulating equipment, the processing of vote-by-mail ballots through such tabulating equipment may begin at 7 a.m. on the 22nd day before the election. However, notwithstanding any such authorization to begin canvassing or otherwise processing vote-by-mail ballots early, no result shall be released until after the closing of the polls in that county on election day. Any supervisor, deputy supervisor, canvassing board member, election board member, or election employee who releases the results of a canvassing or processing of vote-by-mail ballots prior to the closing of the polls in that county on election day commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

Section 3. Notwithstanding that an elector has submitted a vote-by-mail ballot request before the effective date of this act initially applicable through the end of the calendar year of the second ensuing regularly scheduled general election, any such elector must affirmatively resubmit a vote-by-mail ballot request following the effective date of this act in order to receive vote-by-mail ballots for the 2022 primary and general elections.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.