

HJR 14 -- ELECTIONS

SPONSOR: Cox

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Elections by a vote of 7 to 3.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment changes the laws regarding elections. In its main provisions, the resolution authorizes the enactment by general law of provisions which:

(1) Allow a qualified individual to vote in person in advance of election day at all elections. Advance voting may be permitted from the second Wednesday before the election until the first Wednesday before the election excluding Sundays. The voting may be conducted at locations as necessary or desirable to balance reasonable access to advance voting; accountability, integrity, and security of the election; efficiency in the administration of the election; and appropriate and responsible uses of public funds and other resources. Votes cast in advance of election day cannot be counted before the election day. Certain restrictions on the release of voter identification information until after the regular election are specified. Advance voting cannot take place for any election held on or before January 1, 2014, in order to allow election authorities sufficient time to prepare. These provisions will not apply to absentee voting laws, and any law that conflicts with these provisions will not be valid or enforceable;

(2) Allow a person seeking to vote in person in a public election to be required to identify himself or herself and verify his or her qualifications as a citizen of the United States and a resident of Missouri with certain exceptions; and

(3) Allow different requirements for absentee voting when the voter does not appear before the election authority.

If for any reason a portion, clause, or phrase of the resolution is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, the entire resolution will be invalid and of no further force or effect.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Effect on General Revenue Fund of an income of \$0 or a cost of More than \$7,000,000 in FY 2012, an income of \$0 to a cost of Unknown in FY 2013, and an income of \$0 to a cost of Unknown in FY 2014. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will supercede

Weinschenck v. State of Missouri, authorize Missouri to regulate the election process by requiring photographic identification in order to vote, and authorize early voting which will be a great convenience to voters. The bill's fiscal note is greatly overestimated by making the assumption that almost every individual will utilize the cost-recovery portions of the bill to obtain a document in order to vote.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Cox.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that there is no significant voter fraud in Missouri that could be prevented by the use of photographic identification. The costs of photographic identification are significant and the benefits minimal.

Testifying against the bill were Office of the Secretary of State; AARP; Missouri National Education Association; League of Women Voters in Missouri; Missouri Association for Social Welfare; and Professor Denise Lieberman, Washington University.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that current voter registrations are highly inaccurate and photographic identification will help to correct that situation. A relevant study of photographic identification requirements in other states authored by a state professor shows that the requirement did not significantly disenfranchise voters.

Testifying on the bill was Robert Hess.