

HCS HB 2271 -- EARLY VOTING

SPONSOR: Dugger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Elections by a vote of 6 to 3.

This bill requires each local election authority to establish one advance voting center in each county in the state or at least one center for every 100,000 people in population reasonably distributed throughout the county. Any registered voter may vote by advance ballot in person at any election for a federal or statewide office. Advance voting must begin on the third Saturday prior to the election and end on the Tuesday immediately preceding the election, excluding Sundays. Advance voting must be conducted from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and for a four-hour period between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

The Secretary of State and each local election authority must provide adequate public notice of the advance voting centers and voting times including a posting at each local election authority's respective office and on the website of each authority that maintains a website. All current procedures for casting and counting absentee ballots and the appointment of election judges and polling places must apply to advance voting. All costs associated with the implementation of advance voting must be reimbursed by the state by an appropriation for that purpose. If there is no appropriation and distribution of state funds, an election authority must not conduct advance voting.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill allows a reasonable advance voting period with additional voting centers while also ensuring that the state funds the implementation expenses of the local election authorities.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Dugger.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill oppose unfunded mandates and stated that the bill clearly requires the state to pay for the additional election costs. The Secretary of State has been recorded as in favor of state funding of early voting.

Testifying on the bill was Missouri Association of County Clerks.