

HB 1878 -- ELECTIONS

SPONSOR: Simmons

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Elections and Elected Officials by a vote of 8 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 4.

This bill modifies election laws. In its main provisions the bill:

- (1) Requires persons voting in person by use of an absentee ballot to establish their identity under Section 115.427, RSMo;
- (2) Allows voters without personal identification at a polling place to vote a provisional ballot which will be counted based upon a certification process and the return of documentation or by a signature verification process conducted by the election authority; and
- (3) Repeals certain affidavit and notice requirements under Section 115.427.

This bill is the same as HB 334 (2021).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will repeal problematic affidavit sections held unconstitutional by the Missouri Supreme Court and otherwise modify photographic identification requirements in a reasonable manner. In person absentee voting will require the use of such identification. The provisional ballot exceptions to the photographic identification requirement will remain in place and so properly registered voters may vote by provisional ballot if they lack photographic identification at the polling place.

Many empirical studies show that voter turnout is not effected at all by identification requirements. The Missouri Secretary of State's office has a perfect track record of helping all individuals acquire photographic identification and will pay for the necessary documents. All of Europe makes use of photographic identification for voting and many states also require identification. It is a good practice to prevent or reduce any kind of voter fraud.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Simmons; Alanna Ahern; Amanda Hickenbottom-Conner; Amber Horton; Andrew Kruse; Angela Good; Ann Young; Ashley Twellman; Becky Woods; Bev Ehlen; Blair Porter; Brandon Williams; Brenda S Hoofer; Brian Binkley; Brian D Barbagallo; Brittney Manier; Caleb Rust; Carol; Carol Littmann; Carol Orphan; Caroline Ruth Mueller; Carrie Farrow; Carrie Farrow;

Carrie Farrow; Charles B Defarkas; Cheryl; Christine Lewis; Christy D Shelton; Colette Kingston; Cynthia L. Jones; Cynthia Mueller Rice; Danielle Vancil; Daryn Ross; David Norris; Dawn Cox; Debra Nugent; Dedra J Galyon; Diane Mathias; Diane Unger, RN; Don Grimm; Elizabeth A Koerber; Elizabeth Anne Petersen; Erin; Frieda Keough; Gary Brown; Heather Beem; Heather Kruse; Heather Leone-Wilson; Heather R. Herbold; Hugh Mackenzie; Jaime Cheaney; James L. Pelis; James Selesnick; Jamie McLain; Janet Hennessey; Janice Simons; Jeff Schieber; Jennifer Boren; Jennifer Hull; Jennifer Nolen; Jennifer Spencer; Jessica Forst; Jessica Grimm; Jim Conrady; Jimmie J. Rice; Johanna Beaudean; Joshua Lehman; Judith Moorefield; Judy Sofka; Judy Sofka, Missouri Precinct Project/MOPP; Julia Jansma; Julie Duncan; Justin Savage; Justin Savage; Karen L Briggs; Karen Levy; Karen Melendy; Karin Washington; Kate Stratton; Kathleen Lee; Kathryn Hammen; Kathryn S Schoeck; Katie Levy; Katie Lyczak; Kelly Hooker; Kim Penrod; Kimberly D. Fritsche; Kristine Warner; Kristine Warner; Laura Feldmann; Laura Smith-Defarkas; Lauren Hawse; Laurie Nicewaner; Linda Conrady; Linda Obrecht; Linda Waddell; Lisa Williford; Lora Young; Lori; Lori Bourgeois; Marg Deibel; Marjorie Stoeker; Mark Voetter; Marla Fastenau; Marsha King; Matt Bourgeois; Matthew Bourgeois; Megan Mackenzie; Melissa James; Michael Hartman; Michael Hilbert; Michelle Brandt; Michelle Flieg; Michelle Selesnick; Miranda Tasker; Mona Johnston; Nadine Varga; Nancy Griffith; Nathan Billings; Nick Snyder; Pamela Heyen; Pamela Wirick; Patricia A Hilbert; Patricia White; Patricia Wischmann; Patrick Miller; Paula A. Harvey; Paula Hardin; Paula Juelich; Rachel Bourgeois; Rachel Bourgeois; Randy Blane Taylor; Rebecca Porter; Rebekah Roberts; Rob Arnone; Robbyn Kempf; Robert Bourgeois Jr; Ron Joecks; Sara Guthrie; Sarah Reeves; Shauna Brandt; Shauna Poggio; Shawn Kaiser; Shawn Kaiser; Sheila A Keating; Shelly Graves; Sophia Bourgeois; Susan Bosse; Susan Stonecipher; Susanne Boehm; Susanne Boehm; Tara Garcia; Teresa Simpson; Thomas Rice; Tom Latham; Tom Waddell; Tracy Dougan; Tricia Lavin; Troy Mayfield; Valerie Swearingen; Vicki Dunn; Wendy A. Wisniewski; Wendy C. Melrose; Wilma Rademaker; Zachary Smith; Opportunity Solutions Project; and Trish Vincent, Secretary Of State.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that they are opposed to any regulation that makes voting more difficult. There have been no cases of voter impersonation fraud since approximately 2006. The Missouri Secretary of State should be required to provide notice of photographic identification requirements and the removal of notice requirements is a bad bargain designed to reduce the cost of the legislation. The signature matching process for provisional ballots is unreliable and not objective. Older individuals often lack both identification and documents and it can take a long time to correct such issues.

The Missouri Supreme Court has indicated that allowing only

government issued photographic identification for voting is unconstitutional. A 2016 Constitutional amendment does not explicitly authorize only the use of photographic identification, and this legislation is still subject to Constitutional challenges in state court.

Testifying against the bill were Abigail Pankau; Alberta Mobley; Connie Flachs; Deborah J Kitchen; Dennis and Barbara Gaylor; Francine Glass; Getta R. Hall; Joan Gentry; Rabbi Scott Shafrin; Susan Gibson; Susan Lammert; Valerie Larm; Arlene Zarembka, Momentum: Missouri Moving Forward; Arnie C. Ac Dienoff; Jewish Community Relations Council; Deborah Bergfeld; Debra Coe; Don Crozier; Dr. Lisa Groshong; Kathleen McGinnis; Leona Boc,; Linda Brunner; Linda Rezny; Melissa Vatterott, Missouri Coalition For The Environment; Mikkaila Poulin; Missouri NEA; Ronya McCool; Tori Schafer, American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri; Denise Lieberman, Missouri Voter Protection Coalition; Missouri AFL-CIO; Nancy Price; Amy Reed; Brigitte Sheridan; Marissa Polzin; AARP; Mo State Conference of NAACP; and PROMO.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.