

HCS HB 507 -- ELECTIONS

SPONSOR: McGaugh

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elections by a vote of 8 to 3 with 2 voting present. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 8 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 507.

This bill allows a notice of election to be sent by email.

The bill moves the filing dates for a declaration of candidacy in certain political subdivisions and special districts back by one week, from the 17th Tuesday prior to the election until the 14th Tuesday prior to the election, to the 16th Tuesday prior to the election until the 13th Tuesday prior to the election.

Currently, covered voters eligible to register to vote may vote in certain elections by submitting a federal postcard application to apply to vote at their polling place. This bill changes this requirement from the polling place to the office of the election authority on election day.

Currently, interstate former residents and new residents may vote absentee for presidential and vice presidential electors. This bill allows them to vote for those electors at the office of the election authority on election day.

This bill provides that all lists of absentee ballot applications for people with permanent disabilities will be kept confidential and must not be posted or displayed in an area open to the general public nor shown to any unauthorized person.

Currently, a provisional ballot can be cast only in a state or federal election. This bill allows a provisional ballot to be cast in any public election.

The bill provides that votes for write-in candidates must only be counted for candidates who have filed a declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate, even if no candidate has filed for that office.

This adds the following activities to class III election offenses:

(1) Threatening to harm or engaging in conduct reasonably calculated to harass an election official or a member of their family;

(2) Attempting to pressure an election official or member of their family to violate a provision of election law;

(3) Disseminating through any means the personal information of an election official or member of their family for the purpose of threatening to harm or attempting to pressure the official or member of their family to violate a provision of election law.

If a violation results in death or bodily injury to an election official or a member of their family, the offense is a class B felony.

This bill is similar to HB 2140 (2024).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that these changes would improve the voting process for election administrators and voters. Provisional ballots for all elections makes sense; election officials don't like turning voters away. Making the permanently disabled list confidential also makes sense; the name of any voter who receives an absentee ballot is placed on an available list so the relevant information would still be available upon request; just not the list of vulnerable voters.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Mcgaugh; Missouri School Boards' Association; Municipal League of Metro St. Louis; Denise Lieberman, Missouri Voter Protection Coalition; Secure Democracy USA; Arnie Dienoff; Secure Elections Project; Missouri Voter Protection Coalition; Kurt Bahr.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

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