

HCS HB 507 -- ELECTIONS (McGaugh)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Elections

Currently, election challengers can be physically present in polling locations while ballots are cast on election day. This bill allows election challengers in first class counties and charter counties to be physically present while ballots are cast during the in-person absentee voting period.

The bill requires the chair of the county committee of each political party named on the ballot to designate election watchers four days before a watcher can enter a polling or counting location. Information is to be presented to and signed off by the local election authority. If an election authority determines that a watcher does not meet the statutory qualifications, the chair can designate a replacement watcher before 5:00 pm on the Monday before the election.

This bill allows election watchers in first class counties and charter counties to be physically present at in-person absentee voting locations while ballots are being counted or prepared for counting.

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 can 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 can vote absentee for presidential and vice presidential electors. This bill allows them the option 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.

This bill requires any person who files as a candidate for a public office that performs county functions in the City of St. Louis to provide copies of paid receipts or no-tax-due statements for local personal and real property taxes received from the Assessor to the election authority.

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.