

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 8 (as introduced 1-8-97)
Sponsor: Senator Loren Bennett
Committee: Government Operations

Date Completed: 2-3-98

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to specify that an absent voter would be a qualified and registered elector who wished to vote without attending the polls on the day of an election; and remove existing requirements that a voter must meet to vote by absentee ballot.

Currently, under the Election Law, to qualify to vote by absentee ballot, a voter must be 60 years old or older, or meet one of the following requirements: the voter is absent, or expects to be absent, from his or her township or city for the entire time the polls are open on election day; the voter cannot attend the polls without assistance because of a physical disability; the voter is confined to jail awaiting arraignment or trial; the voter cannot attend the polls because of the tenets of his or her religion; or the voter is an election inspector in another precinct. The bill would delete these provisions.

Under the Election Law, an elector may apply for an absent voter ballot at any time during the 75 days before an election, but not later than 2 p.m. of the Saturday immediately preceding the election. In the event that an elector becomes physically disabled, or must be absent from his or her city or township because of sickness or death in the family, such that it is impossible to apply for an absent voter ballot by the deadline, the elector may apply for an emergency absent voter ballot at any time up to 4 p.m. on election day. The bill would eliminate this provision and provide instead that an elector could apply for an emergency absent voter ballot at any time before 4 p.m. on election day if an event occurred at a time that made it impossible to apply for an absent voter ballot by the statutory deadline.

The bill would require the Secretary of State to prescribe a standard absent voter ballot application form, and a standard emergency absent voter ballot application form, including the size of the forms and the color of the paper.

MCL 168.758 et al.

Legislative Analyst: G. Towne

FISCAL IMPACT

Any administrative costs that may be associated with this provision would be absorbed within the current administrative costs of the Department of State. There would be no additional fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: E. Limbs

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.