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**FIRST-TIME VOTER WHO  
REGISTERED BY MAIL: ALLOW  
ABSENT BALLOT IF NOTARIZED**

**House Bill 4554  
Sponsor: Rep. Dale Sheltrown  
Committee: Redistricting and Elections**

**Complete to 5-7-01**

**A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4554 AS INTRODUCED 4-17-01**

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to allow a person who was voting for the first time in a jurisdiction in which he or she had registered by mail to vote absentee ballot if he or she signed and had notarized a special notary form (and provided the voter was otherwise eligible to vote by absentee ballot).

Currently, a person who registers by mail to vote in a jurisdiction within the state must vote in person the first time he or she votes in that jurisdiction. That is, he or she cannot vote by absentee ballot. There are exceptions to this requirement. It does not apply to a person entitled to vote by absentee ballot under the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; a person with a disability as defined in the federal Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act; a person who is 60 years of age or older; or a person who is entitled to vote other than in person under any other federal law.

House Bill 4554 would amend the election law to expand the exception so that it would apply to anyone entitled to vote as an absent voter under Section 758 if he or she signed and had notarized a special form. The local clerk would have to provide the notary form to the first-time voter along with the ballot. If the notary form was not returned with the ballot, then the ballot would not be counted.

Section 758 of the election law currently defines an “absent voter” to mean a qualified and registered elector who is 60 years of age or older or who cannot attend the polls on the day of an election on account of a physical disability; on account of the tenets of his or her religion; because of being an election precinct inspector in another precinct; because he or she will be absent from the township or city during the entire period the polls are open; or on account of being confined in jail awaiting arraignment or trial.

MCL 168.509t and 168.761

Analyst: C. Couch

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.