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BILL ANALYSIS

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House Bill 6061 (as reported by the Committee of the Whole)
Sponsor: Representative Edward Gaffney

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to allow voter registration using the Federal postcard application for members of the armed services or overseas voters who were not registered to vote, but who possessed the qualifications of an elector other than residing in the city, township, or village on or before the 30th day before the next regular, primary, or special election. The Bureau of Elections would be responsible for disseminating information on the procedures for registering and voting to absent armed services and overseas voters.

Under the Law, a qualified elector who is not registered may apply for an absentee ballot if he or she is a civilian employee of the armed services outside the United States; a member of the armed services outside the country; a U.S. citizen residing temporarily outside the territorial limits of the U.S.; a U.S. citizen residing in the District of Columbia; or the spouse or dependent of such a person. Under the bill, these electors who applied to vote as an absent voter by Federal postcard application, would be eligible to vote as an absent voter in any local or State election, including any school election, occurring in the calendar year in which the Federal postcard application was received by the city, village, or township clerk.

A city or township clerk receiving a Federal postcard application would have to transmit to a village clerk and school district election coordinator, where applicable, the necessary information to enable them to forward an absent voter ballot for each applicable election in that calendar year to the qualified elector who submitted the Federal postcard application. If the local elections official rejected a registration or absent voter ballot application submitted on a Federal postcard application by an absent armed services or overseas voter, the election official would have to notify the voter of the rejection.

Currently, overseas absent voters or voters residing in the District of Columbia and their accompanying spouses and dependents, but not members of the armed services outside the U.S. or their accompanying spouses and dependents, must file an affidavit attesting to their qualifications as electors. The bill would delete this requirement. The bill also would repeal Section 504 of the Law, which concerns the procedure electors must follow when they are unable to register to vote in person because they are either absent or disabled.

MCL 168.759a

Legislative Analyst: J.P. Finet

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department of State reports that the bill would not result in any additional costs to the State. The bill would have an indeterminate impact on local units of government to the extent that the bill increased the number of voters who apply to vote as absent voters.

Date Completed: 8-10-04

Fiscal Analyst: Bill Bowerman

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Analysis available @ <http://www.michiganlegislature.org>

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