

Legislative Analysis



SIGNATURE STAMP & MARKS

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House Bill 4478

Sponsor: Rep. Andy Schor

Committee: Elections and Ethics

Complete to 5-10-13

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4478 AS INTRODUCED 3-19-13

Generally speaking, the bill would allow individuals who are unable to write and individuals who cannot sign a signature because of physical disability to use either a signature stamp or a mark on certain election documents.

The Michigan Election Law currently allows individuals who are unable to write to make a mark when applying to register to vote and requires the registration card in such cases to note the month, day, and year of the applicant's birth and other identifying information for use in identifying the individual when applying to vote.

House Bill 4478 would amend the Election Law to do the following:

****** It would revise the current provision regarding individuals applying to register to vote to also apply to individuals who cannot sign their names due to a physical disability and would allow for the use of a signature stamp, in addition to a mark. The language about identifying information would be struck.

****** It would add a new section to allow voters who are unable to write and voters who are unable to sign their names because of a physical disability to use a signature stamp or make a mark to execute an election document where a signature is required. An "election document" would include, but not be limited to, voter applications, absentee ballot applications, and absentee ballot return envelopes.

****** It would specify that if an elector is unable to write, or to sign his or her name because of a physical disability, the master file (that is, the clerk's file of voter registration cards) would have to contain the mark or signature stamp used by that elector where a signature is required.

The bill would define "physical disability" to mean that term as it is defined in the Adult Foster Care Facility Licensing Act (MCL 400.706). There, "physical disability" means *a determinable physical characteristic of an individual that may result from disease, injury, congenital condition of birth, or functional disorder.*

As noted, the bill defines "election document" to include, but not be limited to, any of the following: (a) a voter application as described in Section 523; (b) an absent voter ballot application as described in Section 759 or 759a; (c) an emergency absent voter ballot

application as described in Section 759b; and (d) an absent voter ballot return envelope as described in Section 761.

MCL 168.500 & 168.501

FISCAL IMPACT:

There would be no significant fiscal impact on the state or local units of government.

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■ 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.