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Senate Bill 756 (as introduced 1-28-20)
Sponsor: Senator Ruth Johnson
Committee: Elections and Government Reform

Date Completed: 1-29-20

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to do the following:

- **Specify that if the clerk of a city or township with a population of 40,000 or more notified the Secretary of State at least 40 days before election day, the clerk of that city or township could allow election inspectors appointed to an absent voter counting board to work in shifts.**
- **Require the Secretary of State to post a notice received from a city or township clerk for this purpose on the Department of State's website.**

An absent voter counting board is a precinct that is established by the election commission of a city, township or village for the purpose of processing and tabulating absent voter ballots. The board of election commissioners must provide a place, referred to as an "absent voter counting place", for absent voter counting boards to count absentee ballots.

The Law generally prohibits a person in attendance at an absent voter counting place from leaving after the tallying has begun until the polls close.

The bill specifies that if the clerk of a city or township with a population of 40,000 or more notified the Secretary of State at least 40 days before election day, the clerk of that city or township could allow the election inspectors appointed to an absent voter counting board in that city or township to work in shifts. The Secretary of State would have to post any written notices received from a clerk for this purpose on the Department of State's website.

If the clerk notified the Secretary of State, a second or subsequent shift of election inspectors could begin that shift any time after the polls closed on election day, as provided in the written notice. The bill specifies that if election inspectors were authorized to work in shifts, there could not be gaps between shifts, and election inspectors could not leave the absentee ballots unattended. The bill also would require, at all times, at least one election inspector from each major political party to be present at the absent voter counting place and the policies and procedures adopted by the Secretary of State regarding the counting of absentee ballots would have to be followed.

MCL 168.765a

Legislative Analyst: Dana Adams

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would not have a significant fiscal impact on State or local government. The bill would allow a city or township clerk to submit a written notice to the Secretary of State to permit

its absent voter counting board to work in shifts. The cost of producing this notice likely would be absorbed by existing local appropriations. Under the bill, the Secretary of State would have to post any notice received to the Department of State website. The administrative costs to the Department associated with receiving, processing, and posting a notice would be covered by existing appropriations.

Fiscal Analyst: Elizabeth Raczowski

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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.