

**SUBSTITUTE FOR  
SENATE BILL NO. 308**

A bill to amend 1954 PA 116, entitled  
"Michigan election law,"  
by amending section 31 (MCL 168.31), as amended by 2012 PA 271.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:**

- 1       Sec. 31. (1) The secretary of state shall do all of the  
2 following:
- 3       (a) Subject to subsection (2), issue instructions and  
4 promulgate rules pursuant to the administrative procedures act of  
5 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328, for the conduct of  
6 elections and registrations in accordance with the laws of this  
7 state.
- 8       (b) Advise and direct local election officials as to the  
9 proper methods of conducting elections.

1           (c) Publish and furnish for the use in each election precinct  
2 before each state primary and election a manual of instructions  
3 that includes specific instructions on assisting voters in casting  
4 their ballots, directions on the location of voting stations in  
5 polling places, procedures and forms for processing challenges, and  
6 procedures on prohibiting campaigning in the polling places as  
7 prescribed in this act.

8           (d) Publish indexed pamphlet copies of the registration,  
9 primary, and election laws and furnish to the various county, city,  
10 township, and village clerks a sufficient number of copies for  
11 their own use and to enable them to include 1 copy with the  
12 election supplies furnished each precinct board of election  
13 inspectors under their respective jurisdictions. The secretary of  
14 state may furnish single copies of the publications to  
15 organizations or individuals who request the same for purposes of  
16 instruction or public reference.

17           (e) Prescribe and require uniform forms, notices, and supplies  
18 the secretary of state considers advisable for use in the conduct  
19 of elections and registrations.

20           (f) Prepare the form of ballot for any proposed amendment to  
21 the constitution or proposal under the initiative or referendum  
22 provision of the constitution to be submitted to the voters of this  
23 state.

24           (g) Require reports from the local election officials the  
25 secretary of state considers necessary.

26           (h) Investigate, or cause to be investigated by local  
27 authorities, the administration of election laws, and report  
28 violations of the election laws and regulations to the attorney  
29 general or prosecuting attorney, or both, for prosecution.

1 (i) Publish in the legislative manual the vote for governor  
2 and secretary of state by townships and wards and the vote for  
3 members of the state legislature cast at the preceding November  
4 election, which ~~shall~~**must** be returned to the secretary of state by  
5 the county clerks on or before the first day of December following  
6 the election. All clerks shall furnish to the secretary of state,  
7 promptly and without compensation, any further information  
8 requested of ~~them~~**the clerks** to be used in the compilation of the  
9 legislative manual.

10 (j) Establish a curriculum for comprehensive training and  
11 accreditation of all county, city, township, and village officials  
12 who are responsible for conducting elections.

13 (k) Establish a continuing election education program for all  
14 county, city, township, and village clerks.

15 (l) Establish and require attendance by all new appointed or  
16 elected election officials at an initial course of instruction  
17 within 6 months before the date of the election.

18 (m) Establish a comprehensive training curriculum for all  
19 precinct inspectors.

20 (n) Create an election day dispute resolution team that has  
21 regional representatives of the department of state, which team  
22 ~~shall~~**must** appear on site, if necessary.

23 **(o) Establish and require signature verification training for**  
24 **all county, city, and township clerks that complies with the rules**  
25 **promulgated by the secretary of state under subsection (3) for an**  
26 **objective signature verification process.**

27 (2) Pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969,  
28 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328, the secretary of state shall  
29 promulgate rules establishing uniform standards for state and local

1 nominating, recall, and ballot question petition signatures. The  
2 standards for petition signatures may include, but need not be  
3 limited to, standards for all of the following:

4 (a) Determining the validity of registration of a circulator  
5 or individual signing a petition.

6 (b) Determining the genuineness of the signature of a  
7 circulator or individual signing a petition, including digitized  
8 signatures.

9 (c) Proper designation of the place of registration of a  
10 circulator or individual signing a petition.

11 (3) Pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969,  
12 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328, the secretary of state shall  
13 promulgate rules establishing an objective signature verification  
14 process that is to be used in training all county, city, and  
15 township clerks as required under subsection (1)(o). In  
16 promulgating rules to establish an objective signature verification  
17 process, the secretary of state shall consult with appropriate  
18 handwriting experts. The objective signature verification process  
19 must be focused solely on the objective criteria clerks need in  
20 determining the genuineness of a signature submitted on an absent  
21 voter ballot application or absent voter ballot return envelope  
22 based on whether the submitted signature sufficiently agrees with  
23 the signature for that individual on the master card or the  
24 digitized signature for that individual contained in the qualified  
25 voter file. The objective signature verification process must not  
26 include any of the following:

27 (a) A presumption regarding the validity of any signature that  
28 is to be verified.

29 (b) Instructions or guidance to accept a signature as valid if

1 the signature has any redeeming qualities.

2 (c) Instructions or guidance to consider hypothetical or  
3 circumstantial factors that may affect a signature in the absence  
4 of supporting information provided through contact with the voter  
5 or by other factual grounds.