HOUSE BILL NO. 6368

September 07, 2022, Introduced by Rep. Hall and referred to the Committee on Elections and Ethics.

A bill to amend 1954 PA 116, entitled "Michigan election law,"

by amending sections 544c, 551, 552, and 553 (MCL 168.544c, 168.551, 168.552, and 168.553), section 544c as amended by 2018 PA 650, section 551 as amended by 2012 PA 276, and section 552 as amended by 2005 PA 71, and by adding sections 551a and 551b.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1	Sec. $544c$. (1) A nominating petition must be $8-1/2$ inches by						
2	14 inches in size. On a nominating petition, the words "nominating						
3	petition" must be printed in 24-point boldface type. "We, the						
4	undersigned," et cetera must be printed in 8-point type. "Warning"						
5	and language in the warning must be printed in 12-point boldface						
6	type. The balance of the petition must be printed in 8-point type.						
7	The name, address, and party affiliation of the candidate and the						
8	office for which petitions are signed must be printed in type not						
9	larger than 24-point. The petition must be in the following form:						
10	NOMINATING PETITION						
11	(PARTISAN)						
12	We, the undersigned, registered and qualified voters						
13	of the city or township of, in the county						
14	(strike 1)						
15	of and state of Michigan, nominate,						
16	,						
17	(Name of Candidate)						
18	,						
19	(Street Address or Rural Route) (City or Township)						
20	as a candidate of the party for the office of						
21	,						
22	,						
23	(District, if any)						
24	to be voted for at the primary election to be held on the						
25	day of, 20						
26	WARNING						

A person An individual who knowingly signs more petitions for the same office than there are persons individuals to be elected to the office, signs a petition more than once, or signs a name other than his or her the individual's own name is violating the provisions of the Michigan election law.

6		Printed	Street Address				
7		Name and	or	Date of Signing			
8		Signature	Rural Route	Zip Code	Mo.	Day	Year
9	1						
10	2						 -
11	3						
12	4						 -
13	number	ed lines as abov	<i>r</i> e				

CERTIFICATE OF CIRCULATOR

The undersigned circulator of the above petition asserts that he or she the circulator is 18 years of age or older and a United States citizen; that each signature on the petition was signed in his or her the circulator's presence; that he or she the circulator has neither caused nor permitted a person an individual to sign the petition more than once and has no knowledge of a person an individual signing the petition more than once; and that, to his or her the circulator's best knowledge and belief, each signature is the genuine signature of the person individual purporting to sign the petition, the person individual signing the petition was at the time of signing a registered elector of the city or township listed in the heading of the petition, and the elector was qualified to sign the petition.

Circulator-Do not sign or date certificate until after

1 circulating petition. If the circulator is not a resident of Michigan, the 2 circulator shall make a cross or check mark on the line provided, 3 otherwise each signature on this petition sheet is invalid and the 5 signatures will not be counted by a filing official. By making a 6 cross or check mark on the line provided, the undersigned 7 circulator asserts that he or she the circulator is not a resident of Michigan and agrees to accept the jurisdiction of this state for 8 the purpose of any legal proceeding or hearing that concerns a 9 10 petition sheet executed by the circulator and agrees that legal 11 process served on the secretary of state or a designated agent of the secretary of state has the same effect as if personally served 12 on the circulator. 13 14 15 (Printed Name and Signature of Circulator) (Date) 16 (Complete Residence Address (Street and Number or Rural 17 18 Route)) Do not enter a post office box 19 20 (City or Township, State, Zip Code) 21 (County of Registration, if Registered to Vote, of a 22 23 Circulator who is not a Resident of Michigan) Warning-A circulator knowingly making a false statement in the 24 25 above certificate, a person an individual not a circulator who signs as a circulator, or a person an individual who signs a name 26 27 other than his or her the circulator's own name as circulator is quilty of a misdemeanor. 28

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(2) The petition must be in a form providing a space for the

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circulator and each elector who signs the petition to print his or 1 her the circulator's or elector's name. The secretary of state 2 shall prescribe the location of the space for the printed name. The 3 failure of the circulator or an elector who signs the petition to 4 5 print his or her the circulator's or elector's name, to print his 6 or her the circulator's or elector's name in the location 7 prescribed by the secretary of state, or to enter a zip code or his or her the correct zip code does not affect the validity of the 8 signature of the circulator or the elector who signs the petition. 9 10 A printed name located in the space prescribed for printed names 11 does not constitute the signature of the circulator or elector. If an elector does not include his or her the elector's signature, his 12 or her the elector's street address or rural route, or the date of 13 14 signing on the petition as required under subsection (1), the 15 elector's signature is invalid and must not be counted by a filing 16 official.

(3) If the circulator of a petition under section 482, a qualifying petition for an office named in section 590b(4), or a petition to form a new political party under section 685 is not a resident of this state, the circulator shall indicate where provided on the certificate of circulator that he or she the circulator agrees to accept the jurisdiction of this state for the purpose of any legal proceeding or hearing initiated under section 476, 552, 590f(2), or 685 that concerns a petition sheet executed by the circulator and agrees that legal process served on the secretary of state or a designated agent of the secretary of state has the same effect as if personally served on the circulator.

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28 29 (4) If the secretary of state or a designated agent of the secretary of state is served with legal process as described in

- subsection (3), the secretary of state shall promptly notify the circulator by personal service or certified mail at the circulator's residential address as indicated in the certificate of circulator.
 - (5) The circulator of a petition shall sign and date the certificate of circulator before the petition is filed. A circulator shall not obtain electors' signatures after the circulator has signed and dated the certificate of circulator. A filing official shall not count electors' signatures that were obtained after the date the circulator signed the certificate or that are contained in a petition that the circulator did not sign and date.
 - (6) Except as provided in section 544d, a petition sheet must not be circulated in more than 1 city or township and each signer of a petition sheet must be a registered elector of the city or township indicated in the heading of the petition sheet. The invalidity of 1 or more signatures on a petition does not affect the validity of the remainder of the signatures on the petition.
 - (7) An individual shall not sign more nominating petitions for the same office than there are persons individuals to be elected to the office. An individual who violates this subsection is guilty of a misdemeanor.
 - (8) An individual shall not do any of the following:
 - (a) Sign a petition with a name other than his or her the individual's own name.
 - (b) Make a false statement in a certificate on a petition.
 - (c) If not a circulator, sign a petition as a circulator.
 - (d) Sign a name as **a** circulator other than his or her the circulator's own name.

- (9) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (10), an individual who violates subsection (8) is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than \$500.00 or imprisonment for not more than 93 days, or both.
- (10) An individual shall not sign a petition with multiple names. An individual who violates this subsection is guilty of a felony.
- (11) If after a canvass and a hearing on a petition under section 476 or 552 the board of state canvassers determines that an individual has knowingly and intentionally failed to comply with subsection (8) or (10), the board of state canvassers may impose 1 or more of the following sanctions:
- (a) Disqualify For a petition under section 476, disqualify an obviously fraudulent signatures signature on a petition form on which the violation of subsection (8) or (10) occurred, without checking the signatures against local registration records.and for a petition under section 552, disqualify an obviously fraudulent signature on a petition form on which the violation of subsection (8) or (10) occurred after checking the signature against the digitized signature in the qualified voter file.
- (b) Disqualify from the ballot a candidate who committed,aided or abetted, or knowingly allowed the violation of subsection(8) or (10) on a petition to nominate that candidate.
- (12) If an individual violates subsection (8) or (10) and the affected petition sheet is filed, each of the following who knew of the violation of subsection (8) or (10) before the filing of the affected petition sheet and who failed to report the violation to the secretary of state, the filing official, if different, the attorney general, a law enforcement officer, or the county

prosecuting attorney is guilty of a misdemeanor , punishable by a fine of not more than \$500.00 or imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or both:

- (a) The circulator of the petition, if different than the individual who violated subsection (8) or (10).
- (b) If the petition is a nominating petition, the candidate whose nomination is sought.
- (c) If the petition is a petition for a ballot question or recall, the organization or other person sponsoring the petition drive.
- (13) If after a canvass and a hearing on a petition under section 476 or 552 the board of state canvassers determines that an individual has violated subsection (12), the board of state canvassers may impose 1 or more of the following sanctions:
- (a) Impose on the organization or other person sponsoring the petition drive an administrative fine of not more than \$5,000.00.
 - (b) Charge the organization or other person sponsoring the petition drive for the costs of canvassing a petition form on which a violation of subsection (8) or (10) occurred.
 - (c) Disqualify an organization or other person described in subdivision (a) from collecting signatures on a petition for a period of not more than 4 years.
- (d) Disqualify—For a petition under section 476, disqualify an obviously fraudulent signatures—signature on a petition form on which a violation of subsection (8) or (10) occurred, without checking the signatures against local registration records.and for a petition under section 552, disqualify an obviously fraudulent signature on a petition form on which a violation of subsection (8) or (10) occurred after checking the signature against the digitized

signature in the qualified voter file.

- (e) Disqualify from the ballot a candidate who committed,aided or abetted, or knowingly allowed a violation of subsection(8) or (10) on a petition to nominate that candidate.
- (14) If an individual refuses to comply with a subpoena of the board of state canvassers in an investigation of an alleged violation of subsection (8), (10), or (12), the board may hold the canvass of the petitions in abeyance until the individual complies.
- (15) A person An individual who aids or abets another in an act that is prohibited by this section is guilty of that act.
- (16) The provisions of this section except as otherwise expressly provided apply to all petitions circulated under authority of the election law.
- Sec. 551. Until December 31, 2013, the secretary of state and the various county, township, and city clerks shall receive nominating petitions or filing fees filed under this act up to 4 p.m., eastern standard time, of the twelfth Tuesday before the August primary. Beginning January 1, 2014, Subject to sections 551a and 551b, the secretary of state and the various county, township, and city clerks shall receive nominating petitions or filing fees filed under this act up to 4 p.m., castern standard time, of the fifteenth Tuesday before the August primary. The provisions of this section do not apply to a city that does not nominate its officers under the provisions of this act.
- Sec. 551a. (1) A candidate for public office who may file nominating petitions under this act up to 4 p.m. on the fifteenth Tuesday before the August primary may, up to 4 p.m. on the twentieth Tuesday before the August primary, submit a portion of those nominating petitions to the appropriate filing official for

early signature review as set forth in this section.

- (2) A candidate for public office who submits a portion of the candidate's nominating petitions for early signature review under subsection (1) must include an early signature review filing fee of 50 cents for each signature submitted for early signature review to cover the cost of the early signature review by the appropriate filing official.
- (3) Upon receipt of nominating petitions for early signature review as provided under subsection (1), and the appropriate early signature review filing fee under subsection (2), the appropriate filing official shall compare each signature on the submitted nominating petitions with the digitized signature for that elector contained in the qualified voter file. The appropriate filing official must complete the early signature review under this subsection no later than 7 business days after receiving the nominating petitions for early signature review.
- (4) Upon completing the early signature review under subsection (3), the appropriate filing official must provide a report to the candidate for public office concerning the genuineness and validity of each nominating petition signature submitted for early signature review.
- Sec. 551b. (1) No later than 14 days after a candidate for public office files official nominating petitions, the appropriate filing official shall compare each signature on the official nominating petitions with the digitized signature for that elector contained in the qualified voter file to determine if the candidate for public office filed a sufficient number of valid nominating petition signatures.
 - (2) If, after the signature review required under subsection

- 1 (1), the appropriate filing official determines that the candidate 2 for public office filed an insufficient number of valid nominating
- 3 petition signatures, the appropriate filing official shall
- 4 immediately notify the candidate for public office of the
- 5 insufficiency.
- (3) Upon notification under subsection (2) that an insufficient number of valid nominating petition signatures have been filed, the candidate for public office must be given an opportunity to cure the insufficiency. Within 3 business days after being notified of having an insufficient number of valid signatures, the candidate for public office may attempt to cure the
- insufficiency by doing either of the following:

 (a) Circulating and filing with the appropriate filing

official new nominating petitions that contain additional

15 signatures.

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- 16 (b) Fixing any deficiencies for existing nominating petition 17 signatures that were determined to be invalid.
 - (4) If a candidate for public office attempts to cure the insufficiency under subsection (3), the candidate for public office must include a 50 cent per signature fee for each additional signature submitted under subsection (3)(a) and a 50 cent per signature fee for each existing invalid nominating petition signature fixed under subsection (3)(b).
 - (5) Upon receipt of new nominating petitions under subsection (3)(a) or fixes to existing nominating petition signatures under subsection (3)(b), the appropriate filing official shall, within 7 days, compare each additional signature on the new nominating petitions with the digitized signature for that elector contained in the qualified voter file, and review each fix made to existing

invalid nominating petition signatures.

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28 29 (6) Upon completing the review under subsection (5), the appropriate filing official shall make a final determination as to whether the candidate filed a sufficient number of valid nominating petition signatures.

Sec. 552. (1) The county or city clerk, after the last day specified in this act for receiving and filing nominating petitions, shall immediately certify to the proper board or boards of election commissioners in the city, county, district, or state the name and post office address of each party candidate whose petitions meet the requirements of this act, together with the name of the political party and the office for which he or she the individual is a candidate.

(2) If the county clerk receives a sworn complaint, in writing, questioning the registration or genuineness of the signature of the circulator or of a person an individual signing a petition filed with the county clerk for an office, the county clerk shall commence an investigation. The county clerk shall cause the petition that he or she the county clerk considers necessary to be forwarded to the proper city clerk or township clerk to compare the signatures appearing on the petition with the signatures appearing on the registration record as required by subsection (13). The county clerk may conduct the signature comparisons as required by subsection (13) using the digitized signatures in the qualified voter file, in lieu of requesting the local clerk to conduct the signature comparison. If the request has been made by the county clerk, the city clerk or township clerk shall complete the investigation and report his or her the clerk's findings to the county clerk within 7 days after the request. The investigation

 shall must include the validity of the signatures and the genuineness of a petition as is specified in the sworn complaint and may include any other doubtful signatures or petitions filed on behalf of the candidate against whose petitions the sworn complaint is directed, as the county clerk considers necessary. The county clerk is not required to act on a complaint respecting the validity and genuineness of signatures on a petition unless the complaint sets forth the specific signatures claimed to be invalid and the specific petition for which the complaint questions the validity and genuineness of the signature or registration of the circulator, and unless the complaint is received by the county clerk within 7 days after the deadline for the filing of the nominating petitions.

(3) In addition to the duty specified in subsection (2) for the examination of petitions, the county clerk, on his or her the county clerk's own initiative, on receipt of the nominating petitions, may examine the petitions, and if after examination the county clerk is in doubt as to the validity of the registration or genuineness of the signature of the circulator or persons individuals signing or purported to have signed the petitions, the county clerk shall commence an investigation. Subject to subsection (13), the county clerk shall cause the petitions in question to be forwarded to the proper city clerk or township clerk to compare the signatures appearing on the petitions with the signatures appearing on the registration records. The county clerk may conduct the signature comparisons as required by subsection (13) using the digitized signatures in the qualified voter file, in lieu of requesting the local clerk to conduct the signature comparison.

(4) The clerk of a political subdivision shall cooperate fully with the county clerk in a request made to the clerk by the county

clerk in determining the validity of doubtful signatures by checking the signatures against registration records in an expeditious and proper manner.

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- (5) At least 2 business days before the county clerk makes a final determination on challenges to and sufficiency of a petition, the county clerk shall make public its staff report concerning disposition of challenges filed against the petition. Beginning with the receipt of any document from local election officials under subsection (2) or (3), the county clerk shall make that document available to petitioners and challengers on a daily basis.
- (6) Upon the completion of the investigation or examination, the county clerk shall immediately make an official declaration of the sufficiency or insufficiency of nominating petitions for which a sworn complaint has been received or of the sufficiency or insufficiency of nominating petitions that the county clerk has examined or investigated on his or her the county clerk's own initiative. A person An individual feeling aggrieved by a determination made by the county clerk may have the determination reviewed by the secretary of state by filing a written request with the secretary of state within 3 days after the official declaration of the county clerk, unless the third day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, in which case the request may be filed not later than 4 p.m. on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday. Alternatively, the aggrieved person individual may have the determination of the county clerk reviewed by filing a mandamus, certiorari, or other appropriate remedy in the circuit court. A person An individual who filed a nominating petition and feels aggrieved by the determination of the secretary of state may then have that determination reviewed by mandamus,

certiorari, or other appropriate remedy in the circuit court.

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- (7) A city clerk with whom nominating petitions are filed may examine the petitions and investigate the validity and genuineness of signatures appearing on the petitions. Subject to subsection (13), the city clerk may check the signatures against registration records. The city clerk shall make a determination as to the sufficiency or insufficiency of the petitions upon the completion of the examination or investigation, and shall make an official declaration of the findings. A person An individual feeling aggrieved by the determination has the same rights of review as in case of a determination by the county clerk.
- (8) Upon the filing of nominating petitions with the secretary of state, the secretary of state shall notify the board of state canvassers within 5 days after the last day for filing the petitions. The notification shall must be by first-class mail. Upon the receipt of the nominating petitions, the board of state canvassers shall canvass the petitions to ascertain if the petitions have been signed by the requisite number of qualified and registered electors. Subject to subsection (13), for the purpose of determining the validity of the signatures, the board of state canvassers may cause a doubtful signature to be checked against the qualified voter file or the registration records by the clerk of a political subdivision in which the petitions were circulated. If the board of state canvassers receives a sworn complaint, in writing, questioning the registration of or the genuineness of the signature of the circulator or of a person an individual signing a nominating petition filed with the secretary of state, the board of state canvassers shall commence an investigation. Subject to subsection (13), the board of state canvassers shall verify the

registration or the genuineness of a signature as required by 1 subsection (13). If the board is unable to verify the genuineness 2 of a signature on a petition, the board shall cause the petition to 3 be forwarded to the proper city clerk or township clerk to compare 4 5 the signatures on the petition with the signatures on the 6 registration record, or in some other manner determine whether the 7 signatures on the petition are valid and genuine. The board of 8 state canvassers is not required to act on a complaint respecting the validity and genuineness of signatures on a petition unless the 9 10 complaint sets forth the specific signatures claimed to be invalid 11 and the specific petition for which the complaint questions the 12 validity and genuineness of the signature or the registration of the circulator, and unless the complaint is received by the board 13 14 of state canvassers within 7 days after the deadline for filing the 15 nominating petitions. After receiving a request from the board of 16 state canvassers under this subsection, the clerk of a political 17 subdivision shall cooperate fully in determining the validity of 18 doubtful signatures by rechecking the signatures against registration records in an expeditious and proper manner. The board 19 20 of state canvassers may extend the 7-day challenge period if it finds that the challenger did not receive a copy of each petition 21 sheet that the challenger requested from the secretary of state. 22 The extension of the challenge deadline under this subsection does 23 24 not extend another deadline under this section.

(9) The board of state canvassers may hold a hearing upon a complaint filed or for a purpose considered necessary by the board of state canvassers to conduct an investigation of the petitions. In conducting a hearing, the board of state canvassers may issue subpoenas and administer oaths. The board of state canvassers may

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also adjourn periodically awaiting receipt of returns from investigations that are being made or for other necessary purposes, but shall complete the canvass not less than 9 weeks before the primary election at which candidates are to be nominated. Before making a final determination, the board of state canvassers may consider any deficiency found on the face of the petition that does not require verification against data maintained in the qualified voter file or in the voter registration files maintained by a city or township clerk.

- (10) At least 2 business days before the board of state canvassers meets to make a final determination on challenges to and sufficiency of a petition, the board shall make public its staff report concerning disposition of challenges filed against the petition. Beginning with the receipt of any document from local election officials under subsection (8), the board of state canvassers shall make that document available to candidates and challengers on a daily basis.
- insufficiency of a nominating petition shall must be made by the board of state canvassers not less than 60 days before the primary election at which candidates are to be nominated. At the time of filing a nominating petition with the secretary of state, the person-individual filing the petition may request a notice of the approval or rejection of the petition. If a request is made at the time of filing the petition, the secretary of state, immediately upon the determination of approval or rejection, shall transmit by registered mail to the person-individual making the request an official notice of the sufficiency or insufficiency of the petitions.

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- (12) A person An individual who filed a nominating petition with the secretary of state and who feels aggrieved by a determination made by the board of state canvassers may have the determination reviewed by mandamus, certiorari, or other appropriate process in the supreme court.
- (13) The qualified voter file may must be used to determine the validity of petition signatures by verifying the registration of signers. If the qualified voter file indicates that, on the date the elector signed the petition, the elector was not registered to vote, there is a rebuttable presumption that the signature is invalid. If the qualified voter file indicates that, on the date the elector signed the petition, the elector was not registered to vote in the city or township designated on the petition, there is a rebuttable presumption that the signature is invalid. The qualified voter file shall must be used to determine the genuineness of a signature on a petition. Signature comparisons shall must be made with the digitized signatures in the qualified voter file. The county clerk or the board of state canvassers shall conduct the signature comparison using digitized signatures contained in the qualified voter file for their respective investigations. If the qualified voter file does not contain a digitized signature of an elector, the city or the township clerk shall compare the petition signature to the signature contained on the master card.
- (14) Not less than 60 days before the primary election at which candidates are to be nominated, the secretary of state shall certify to the proper boards of election commissioners in the various counties in the state, the name and post office address of each partisan or nonpartisan candidate whose petitions have been filed with the secretary of state and meet the requirements of this

act, together with the name of the political party, if any, and the office for which he or she the individual is a candidate.

Sec. 553. In case Subject to section 551b, if it is determined that the nominating petitions of any candidate do not comply with the requirements of this act, or if for any other cause such a candidate is not entitled to have his the candidate's name printed upon on the official primary ballots, it shall be is the duty of the secretary of state or county or city clerk to immediately notify such the candidate of such that fact, together with a statement of the reasons why his the candidate's name was not certified to the respective boards of election commissioners.