

Legislative Analysis



ALLOWABLE USES FOR ON-DEMAND BALLOT PRINTING

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 6052 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Penelope Tsernoglou

Committee: Elections

Complete to 12-7-24

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

(Enacted as Public Act 221 of 2024)

SUMMARY:

House Bill 6052 would amend the Michigan Election Law to expand the allowable uses for on-demand ballot printing systems beyond their currently allowed use for early voting.

To implement the early voting provisions added to the state constitution by Proposal 2 of 2022,¹ 2023 PA 81 required the secretary of state to evaluate new voting system technology that produces ballots on demand or may be used to cast and tabulate early voting ballots and submit appropriate new technology to the Board of State Canvassers for approval. The secretary of state also was charged with issuing instructions regarding ballots produced by an on-demand ballot printing system and that are subject to challenge.²

In addition, 2023 PA 81 amended the Michigan Election Law to exempt ballots produced by an on-demand ballot printing system for purposes of early voting from the general requirements that paper ballots be numbered sequentially and have an attached, perforated, numbered stub. The bill would additionally exempt the following kinds of ballots from those requirements if they are produced by an on-demand ballot printing system:

- Absent voter ballots issued to individuals who register to vote or update a voter registration at a clerk's office on election day.
- Ballots issued to individuals who register to vote or update a voter registration at an election day vote center.
- Ballots translated to a language other than English.

MCL 168.570, 168.795b, and 168.797a

BRIEF DISCUSSION:

According to committee testimony, the use of ballot-on-demand technology for early voting accounted for over 1.0 million ballots in 2024, allowing clerks to print the correct ballot for each individual in real time. Supporters of House Bill 6052 suggest that expanding its use to same-day voter registration, election day vote centers, and ballots in a non-English language is the logical next step for using this technology in Michigan.

Opponents of the bill, however, raised concerns about the lack of requirements for a numbering system for ballots printed on demand.

¹ Section 4(1)(m): <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=MCL-ARTICLE-II-4>

² See <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-168-720c>

2023 PA 81: <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2023-SB-0367>

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the state or local units of government.

POSITIONS:

Representatives of the following entities testified in support of the bill (11-12-24):

- Department of State
- Promote The Vote

The following entities indicated support for the bill (11-12-24):

- American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan
- Voters Not Politicians

A representative of Pure Integrity for Michigan Elections testified in opposition to the bill.
(11-12-24)

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