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House Bill 4568 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Karen Whitsett
House Committee: Elections
Senate Committee: Elections and Ethics

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to delete the prohibition against a person hiring transportation to take non-disabled voters to the polls.

MCL 168.931

BRIEF RATIONALE

Voters who do not have access to personal vehicles or reliable public transportation may face difficulties in accessing polling places. For example, in 2017, one-third of Detroit residents did not own a car.¹ To help convey these voters to polling places, several Detroit businesses, including the Detroit Bus Company and members of the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association, offered voters free rides to the polls using their fleets during the 2020 presidential election.² While voters may take advantage of free rides to the polls, hiring transportation through apps like Uber or Lyft, for example, could be more accessible; however, current law prohibits this. Accordingly, it has been suggested that this prohibition be removed.

PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

(This section does not provide a comprehensive account of previous legislative efforts on this subject matter.)

The bill is similar to House Bill 5516 of the 2021-2022 Legislative Session.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill could result in savings for local units of government as providing transportation to voters on election day would no longer result in a misdemeanor offense. Depending on the number of such incidences that no longer would be considered a misdemeanor, local governments could see a savings from reduced jail costs as well as costs for local law enforcement and courts as they would no longer be required to prosecute these cases. Additionally, penal fine revenue that goes to local and county law libraries would be lost as those fines would no longer be collected. The amount of savings is indeterminate and depends on the number of cases no longer prosecuted as well as the costs for local jails as they vary by jurisdiction.

Date Completed: 10-13-23

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco, Jr.

¹ Gerber, Elisabeth et al., *Detroiters' Views on Transportation and Mobility*, Detroit Metro Area Communities Study, University of Michigan, 2017.

² Williams, Monica, "Need a ride to the polls? Amid a court ban, Detroiters giving free lifts", *Bridge Detroit*, October 28, 2020.