

REVISE REGISTRATION AND ABSENT BALLOT RESTRICTIONS ON OVERSEAS & MILITARY VOTERS

Mitchell Bean, Director
Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 6061

Sponsor: Rep. Edward Gaffney

Committee: None

Complete to 7-6-04

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 6061 AS INTRODUCED 6-30-04

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law (MCL 168.759a) to specify that a member of the armed services or an overseas voter who was not registered to vote, but who possessed the qualifications of an elector (other than the requirement of residing in the city, township, or village by the 30th day before the next election), could apply for registration by using the federal postcard application. The bill specifies that the Bureau of Elections at the Department of State would be responsible for getting the information on the procedures for registering and voting to both absent armed services voters and overseas voters.

Also under the bill, a qualified armed services or overseas voter who registered to vote by federal postcard application, and who applied to vote as an absent voter by federal postcard application, would be eligible to vote as an absent voter in any election (including a school election) occurring in the calendar year in which the postcard was received by election officials. However, he or she could not vote if the application was received by the clerk after 2 p.m. on the Saturday before the election. A city or township clerk who received a postcard application would be required to transmit to the village clerk and secretary of the school district the necessary information to enable them to forward an absent voter ballot for each applicable election in that calendar year. If the local elections official rejected a registration or absent voter ballot application submitted on a postcard application, then he or she would be required to notify the armed services or overseas voter of the rejection.

The bill would eliminate the current requirement in statute that overseas absent voters or voters residing in the District of Columbia, and their accompanying spouses and dependents, (but not members of the armed services or their accompanying spouses and dependents) file an affidavit attesting to their qualifications as electors. It also would eliminate a requirement that a city or township clerk mail absentee ballots to previous absent overseas voters at their last known mailing address. Finally, the bill would repeal Section 504 of the election law which concerns the procedures electors must follow when they are unable to make personal application for voter registration (including electors with physical disabilities), a protocol that currently requires for most, but not all, electors the use of duplicate registration cards and duplicate notarized affidavits.

[For background information on these provisions, including fiscal information, see the analysis dated 10-8-03 of House Bill 5086, which proposed similar amendments to state election law. It is available on the Michigan Legislature web site.]

Legislative Analyst: Joan Hunault

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.