Introduced by Senators Booher, Brandenburg, Casperson, Caswell, Colbeck, Emmons, Green, Hansen, Hildenbrand, Jansen, Jones, Kahn, Kowall, Marleau, Meekhof, Moolenaar, Nofs, Pappageorge, Pavlov, Proos, Richardville, Robertson, Rocca, Schuitmaker and Walker

ENROLLED SENATE BILL No. 803

AN ACT to amend 1954 PA 116, entitled "An act to reorganize, consolidate, and add to the election laws; to provide for election officials and prescribe their powers and duties; to prescribe the powers and duties of certain state departments, state agencies, and state and local officials and employees; to provide for the nomination and election of candidates for public office; to provide for the resignation, removal, and recall of certain public officers; to provide for the filling of vacancies in public office; to provide for and regulate primaries and elections; to provide for the purity of elections; to guard against the abuse of the elective franchise; to define violations of this act; to provide appropriations; to prescribe penalties and provide remedies; and to repeal certain acts and all other acts inconsistent with this act," by amending sections 523 and 759 (MCL 168.523 and 168.759), section 523 as amended by 2005 PA 71 and section 759 as amended by 1995 PA 261, and by adding section 766a.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 523. (1) At each election, before being given a ballot, each registered elector offering to vote shall identify himself or herself by presenting an official state identification card issued to that individual under 1972 PA 222, MCL 28.291 to 28.300, an operator's or chauffeur's license issued to that individual under the Michigan vehicle code, 1949 PA 300, MCL 257.1 to 257.923, or other generally recognized picture identification card and by executing an application, on a form prescribed by the secretary of state, in the presence of an election official which includes all of the following:

(a) The name of the elector.

(b) The elector's address of residence.

(c) The elector's date of birth.

(d) An affirmative statement by the elector indicating that he or she is a citizen of the United States.

(e) The elector's signature or mark.

(2) If an elector does not affirmatively state on the application that he or she is a citizen of the United States, that elector shall be challenged by an election inspector. If the elector fails to state under oath that he or she is a citizen of the United States, that elector shall not be issued a ballot.

(3) If an elector's signature contained in the qualified voter file is available in the polling place, the election official shall compare the signature upon the application with the digitized signature provided by the qualified voter file. If an elector's signature is not contained in the qualified voter file, the election official shall process the application in the same manner as applications are processed when a voter registration list is used in the polling place. If voter registration lists are used in the precinct, the election inspector shall determine if the name on the application to vote appears on the voter registration list. If the name appears on the voter registration list, the elector shall provide further identification or other information stated upon the voter registration list. If the signature or an item of information, other than

citizenship, does not correspond, the vote of the person shall be challenged, and the same procedure shall be followed as provided in this act for the challenging of an elector. If the elector does not have an official state identification card, operator's or chauffeur's license, or other generally recognized picture identification card as required under this subsection, the individual shall sign an affidavit to that effect before an election inspector and be allowed to vote as otherwise provided in this act. However, an elector being allowed to vote without the identification required under this subsection is subject to challenge as provided in section 727.

(4) If, upon a comparison of the signature or other identification as required in this section, it is found that the applicant is entitled to vote, the election officer having charge of the registration list shall approve the application and write his or her initials on the application, after which the number on the ballot issued shall be noted on the application. The application shall serve as 1 of the 2 poll lists required to be kept as a record of a person who has voted. The application shall be filed with the township, city, or village clerk. If voter registration cards are used in the precinct, the date of the election shall be noted by 1 of the election officials upon the precinct registration card of each elector voting at an election. If voter registration lists are used in the precinct, the election official shall clearly indicate upon the list each elector voting at that election. The clerk of a city, village, or township shall maintain a record of voting participation for each registered elector.

Sec. 759. (1) At any time during the 75 days before a primary or special primary, but not later than 2 p.m. of the Saturday immediately before the primary or special primary, an elector who qualifies to vote as an absent voter, as defined in section 758, may apply for an absent voter ballot. The elector shall apply in person or by mail with the clerk of the township, city, or village in which the elector is registered. An application received before a primary or special primary may be for either that primary only, or for that primary and the election that follows.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (1), at anytime during the 75 days before an election, but not later than 2 p.m. of the Saturday before the election, an elector who qualifies to vote as an absent voter, as defined in section 758, may apply for an absent voter ballot. The elector shall apply in person or by mail with the clerk of the township, city, or village in which the voter is registered.

(3) An application for an absent voter ballot under this section may be made in any of the following ways:

(a) By a written request signed by the voter stating the statutory grounds for making the application.

(b) On an absent voter ballot application form provided for that purpose by the clerk of the city, township, or village.

(c) On a federal postcard application.

(4) An applicant for an absent voter ballot shall sign the application. A clerk or assistant clerk shall not deliver an absent voter ballot to an applicant who does not sign the application. A person shall not be in possession of a signed absent voter ballot application except for the applicant; a member of the applicant's immediate family; a person residing in the applicant's household; a person whose job normally includes the handling of mail, but only during the course of his or her employment; a registered elector requested by the applicant to return the application; or a clerk, assistant of the clerk, or other authorized election official. A registered elector who is requested by the applicant to return his or her absent voter ballot application shall sign the certificate on the absent voter ballot application.

(5) The clerk of a city, township, or village shall have absent voter ballot application forms available in the clerk's office at all times and shall furnish an absent voter ballot application form to anyone upon a verbal or written request. The absent voter ballot application shall be in substantially the following form:

"Application for absent voter ballot for:

☐ The primary or special primary election to be held on _____ (Date).

☐ The election to be held on _____ (Date).

(Check applicable election or elections)

I, ... , a qualified and registered elector of the .... precinct of the township of .... or village of .... or of the .... ward of the city of .... , in the county of .... and state of Michigan, apply for an official ballot, or ballots, to be voted by me at the election or elections as requested in this application.

Are you a United States citizen? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

The statutory grounds on which I base my request are:

☐ I expect to be absent from the community in which I am registered for the entire time the polls are open on election day.

☐ I am physically unable to attend the polls without the assistance of another.

☐ I cannot attend the polls because of the tenets of my religion.

☐ I have been appointed an election precinct inspector in a precinct other than the precinct where I reside.

☐ I am 60 years of age or older.

☐ I cannot attend the polls because I am confined to jail awaiting arraignment or trial.

(Check applicable reason)

Send absent voter ballot to me at:

....
(Street No. or R.R.)

....
     (Post Office)   (State)   (Zip Code)

My registered address ....
(Street No. or R.R.)

....
      (Post Office)   (State)   (Zip Code)

Date..

I certify that the statements in this absent voter ballot application are true.

....
(Signature)

WARNING

If you answer that you are not a citizen of the United States, you will not be issued an absent voter ballot. If you do not answer the citizenship question on this application, an absent voter ballot will be issued to you, but the ballot will not be counted unless you answer the citizenship question in writing to the clerk before the polls close on election day.

A person making a false statement in this absent voter ballot application is guilty of a misdemeanor. It is a violation of Michigan election law for a person other than those listed in the instructions to return, offer to return, agree to return, or solicit to return your absent voter ballot application to the clerk. An assistant authorized by the clerk who receives absent voter ballot applications at a location other than the clerk's office must have credentials signed by the clerk. Ask to see his or her credentials before entrusting your application with a person claiming to have the clerk's authorization to return your application.

Certificate of Authorized Registered
Elector Returning Absent Voter
Ballot Application

I certify that my name is .... , my address is .... , and my date of birth is .... ; that I am delivering the absent voter ballot application of .... at his or her request; that I did not solicit or request to return the application; that I have not made any markings on the application; that I have not altered the application in any way; that I have not influenced the applicant; and that I am aware that a false statement in this certificate is a violation of Michigan election law.

_____   _____
         (Date)   (Signature)"

(6) The following instructions for an applicant for an absent voter ballot shall be included with each application furnished an applicant:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS FOR ABSENT VOTER BALLOTS

Step 1. After completely filling out the application, sign and date the application in the place designated. Your signature must appear on the application or you will not receive an absent voter ballot.

Step 2. Deliver the application by 1 of the following methods:

(a) Place the application in an envelope addressed to the appropriate clerk and place the necessary postage upon the return envelope and deposit it in the United States mail or with another public postal service, express mail service, parcel post service, or common carrier.

(b) Deliver the application personally to the clerk's office, to the clerk, or to an authorized assistant of the clerk.

(c) In either (a) or (b), a member of the immediate family of the voter including a father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild or a person residing in the voter's household may mail or deliver the application to the clerk for the applicant.

(d) If an applicant cannot return the application in any of the above methods, the applicant may select any registered elector to return the application. The person returning the application must sign and return the certificate at the bottom of the application.

(7) A person who prints and distributes absent voter ballot applications shall print on the application the warning, certificate of authorized registered elector returning absent voter ballot application, and instructions required by this section.

(8) A person who makes a false statement in an absent voter ballot application is guilty of a misdemeanor. A person who forges a signature on an absent voter ballot application is guilty of a felony. A person who is not authorized in this act and who both distributes absent voter ballot applications to absent voters and returns those absent voter ballot applications to a clerk or assistant of the clerk is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Sec. 766a. If an election is contested in a court, an absent voter ballot that was not counted because the absent voter did not answer the citizenship question in writing to the clerk before the polls closed on election day, as required under section 759, may be counted if the court determines that the voter was a citizen at the time of the election in question.

Enacting section 1. This amendatory act takes effect August 15, 2012.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.

Carol Morey Viventi

Secretary of the Senate

Gary E. Randall

Clerk of the House of Representatives

Approved _____

Governor