



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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## BILL ANALYSIS



Telephone: (517) 373-5383  
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Senate Bill 117 (Substitute S-1 as reported)  
Senate Bill 297 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Senator Ruth Johnson (S.B. 117)  
Senator Paul Wojno (S.B. 297)  
Committee: Elections

**CONTENT**

Senate Bill 117 (S-1) would amend Michigan Election Law to do the following allow a member of a uniformed service or the Merchant Marine who, by reason of his or her service, was absent on the date of an election from the place of residence where he or she otherwise was qualified to vote to return a voted ballot electronically.

The bill would also require the Secretary of State (SOS) to promulgate rules that established policies and procedures for the electronic return of voted ballots by eligible members. In doing so, the SOS would have to require an eligible member to use a U.S. Department of Defense verified electronic signature, so that the identity of the eligible member could be verified using those policies and procedures. The Secretary of State would have to take reasonable steps to ensure the integrity and secrecy of voted ballots returned electronically. The Secretary of State also would have to promulgate the rules to implement the bill by January 1, 2020, and would have to allow for the electronic return of voted ballots by eligible members no later than the 2020 August primary election.

Senate Bill 297 would define "United States Department of Defense verified electronic signature" as the certificate-based digital identification code issued to qualified personnel by the U.S. Department of Defense as part of the common access card, or its successor.

Senate Bill 117 and Senate Bill 297 are tie-barred.

MCL 168.759a (S.B. 117)  
Proposed MCL 168.18a (S.B. 297)

Legislative Analyst: Nathan Leaman

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There could be additional costs for the Department of State to promulgate rules to establish policies and procedures for the electronic return of voted ballots by eligible members. The bill also authorizes the Department to develop and maintain a secure web portal on its website to facilitate the electronic return of voted ballots by eligible members. The Department's costs to promulgate rules should be minimal and would be absorbed within its annual appropriations. The costs for developing a web portal could require additional appropriations, however, the bill makes this optional for the Department. The Department's ability to absorb the cost within current appropriations would depend on the actual costs of developing the web portal and on its capabilities to add this portal to its current website.

Date Completed: 5-28-19

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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Bill Analysis @ [www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa)

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