

Senate Bill 273 (Substitute S-1 as reported)
Senate Bill 278 (Substitute S-1 as reported)
Sponsor: Senator Ruth A. Johnson (S.B. 273)
Senator Michael D. MacDonald (S.B. 278)
Committee: Elections

CONTENT

Senate Bill 273 (S-1) would amend the Michigan Election Law to do the following:

- Require the design and construction of an absent voter ballot drop box to be approved by the Secretary of State (SOS) and the applicable board of county canvassers before being used in an election.
- Require the design and construction of a drop box installed before January 1, 2022, to be approved by June 1, 2022.
- Prohibit a drop box that was installed before January 1, 2022, and was not approved by June 1, 2022, from being used in an election held after June 1, 2022.
- Require a video recording device to monitor each drop box location beginning June 1, 2022.
- Require a city or township to retain the recording of a drop box location for at least 30 days after the final certification of the election at which the absentee ballots were collected.
- Require the recordings to be made available upon request to the SOS and applicable board of county canvassers.
- Require an absent voter ballot drop box to contain the text specified in the bill by June 1, 2022.

Senate Bill 278 (S-1) would amend the Michigan Election Law to do the following:

- Require all absent voter ballot drop boxes that were installed in a city or township to comply with the bill's requirements by no later than June 1, 2022.
- Require an individual authorized to collect absent voter ballots from an absent voter ballot drop box to immediately return collected ballots to the clerk's office, or, if applicable, to an absent voter counting board on election day, unless that individual was collecting ballots from another drop box.
- Require ballots collected from a drop box to be transported in an approved ballot container.
- Require the city or township clerk to document each time absent voter ballots were collected from a drop box, if that box were not located on the grounds of a city or township's clerk office or an official satellite office of the city or township clerk in that city or township and prescribe the information that would have to be included in the documentation.
- Require records to be preserved and maintained by the city or township clerk for at least 22 months after the election for which the absent voter ballots were collected.

The bills are tie-barred.

FISCAL IMPACT

Senate Bill 273 (S-1) would have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on State and local units of government.

City and township clerks not already in possession of video recording and lighting systems that could comply with the specifications contained in the bill would incur additional costs. Local units would have to purchase or update video recording or lighting equipment and pay for installation and maintenance and likely would incur additional administrative costs associated with these efforts. The magnitude of the fiscal impact would depend upon the costs associated with the equipment as well as the number of recording systems required to monitor all ballot drop boxes. Similarly, local units of government could be required to upgrade or replace existing drop boxes in order to ensure that they were properly secured and were affixed with the required felony notice. This would result in additional labor and supply expenditures.

The Secretary of State and boards of county canvassers could incur minor costs associated with the approval of ballot drop boxes. The magnitude of these costs would depend upon the number of drop boxes that would need to be approved. However, these costs likely could be covered by existing appropriations.

Senate Bill 278 (S-1) would have no fiscal impact on State or local units of government.

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