



Senate Fiscal Agency  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



Telephone: (517) 373-5383  
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bill 385 (as enacted)  
Sponsor: Senator Erika Geiss  
Senate Committee: Elections and Ethics  
House Committee: Elections

**PUBLIC ACT 251 of 2023**

Date Completed: 1-3-24

**RATIONALE**

An applicant for precinct election inspector must fill out and return a physical application to the appropriate county, city, or township clerk. Some believe that this requirement is outdated and inconvenient, requiring applicants to spend time and resources to deliver applications and clerks to process them. Accordingly, it was suggested that the process to apply for a precinct inspector position be digitized.

**CONTENT**

**The bill amends the Michigan Election Law to allow a county, city, or township clerk to accept the filing of an application for precinct election inspector through an online application portal or by other electronic means.**

Among other things, the Law prescribes the process for applying for the position of a precinct election inspector. To be appointed to a board of election inspectors, an individual must file an application with the city or township clerk in the county where the individual wishes to serve as a precinct election inspector. The bill allows an application to be filed with a county clerk to fulfill this requirement. Additionally, the bill deletes a requirement that the application be in the applicant's own handwriting.

Under the bill, a county, city, or township clerk may allow an applicant for precinct election inspector to file an application through an online application portal or by other electronic means.

The bill will take effect February 13, 2024.

MCL 168.677

**ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

**Supporting Argument**

Some believe the bill is necessary to expand access and remove barriers for those who want to become a precinct election inspector. Individuals may not have the time or the means of transportation to deliver an application to a local clerk's office. Additionally, people may find accessing information about precinct election inspectors and the application online easier than at their local clerk's office. Overall, digitizing the application process will make it more convenient.

### **Supporting Argument**

As elections become increasingly digitized, clerks must hire individuals with technological skills. For example, according to testimony before the House Committee on Elections, prospective precinct election inspectors were required to apply in their own handwriting so that a clerk could evaluate their handwriting's legibility. While this was important for elections conducted by hand, new technology has reduced the importance of neat handwriting. Instead, precinct election inspectors must know how to operate vote tabulators, voter assist terminals, and other electronic voting technology. Allowing individuals to submit precinct election inspector applications online will attract applicants with these necessary skills.

### **Opposing Argument**

According to testimony before the Senate Committee on Elections and Ethics, allowing individuals to submit a precinct election inspector application online may open the process to fraud without proper safeguards. For example, individuals should be required to physically sign the application to avoid forgery.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill will have no fiscal impact on the State and an indeterminate fiscal impact on local units of government. It allows for electronic filing of the application for precinct election inspector. The local units of government will have a cost to build the electronic filing system if one does not exist already. The local units of government will have an indeterminate cost or savings of using an electronic system compared to the current system.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco, Jr.

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.