



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 385 (as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Erika Geiss
Committee: Elections and Ethics

Date Completed: 10-5-23

RATIONALE

Currently, an applicant for precinct 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 Some believe that this requirement is outdated and inconvenient, requiring applicants to spend time and resources to deliver an application. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the process to apply for a precinct inspector position be digitized.

CONTENT

The bill would amend 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 would allow an application to be filed with a county clerk to fulfill this requirement. Additionally, the bill would delete a requirement that the application be in the applicant's own handwriting.

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

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 would make it more convenient.

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 would have no fiscal impact on the State and an indeterminate fiscal impact on local units of government. It would allow for electronic filing of the application for precinct election inspector. The local units of government would have a cost to build the electronic filing system if one did not exist already. The local units of government would 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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