



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



BILL ANALYSIS

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

Senate Bill 594 (as enacted)
Sponsor: Senator Jeremy Moss
Senate Committee: Elections and Ethics
House Committee: Elections

PUBLIC ACT 257 of 2023

Date Completed: 1-3-24

RATIONALE

In 2018, Public Act 350 allowed individuals to register to vote online; however, an individual had to have a valid Michigan license or official State personal identification (ID) card to register. To receive a license or State ID, an individual must visit a Secretary of State (SOS) office in-person. Some people have concern that these requirements may have prevented some individuals, especially elderly or disabled individuals, from being able to register to vote online. Accordingly, it was suggested that the methods of verifying identity for the online voting portal be expanded.

CONTENT

The bill amends Chapter XXIII (Registration of Electors) of the Michigan Election Law to allow an individual to register to vote through the electronic voter registration interface by providing the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number and other identifying information. Currently, an application through the interface may only be made with a driver's license or State identification card. Additionally, the bill requires the SOS to develop a process for an applicant to submit an electronic signature through the interface.

The bill will take effect June 30, 2025.

Electronic Voter Registration Eligibility

Generally, Section 23 (Registration of Electors) of the Law governs the qualifications for and process of voter registration in the State. The Law currently allows individuals to register to vote electronically through the SOS electronic voter registration interface.

Currently, only an individual who possesses the following is eligible to submit an electronic voter registration application:

- The qualifications of an elector (citizenship of the United States, not less than 17.5 years of age, a resident of Michigan, and a resident of the city or township in which they are attempting to register to vote).
- A valid official State personal ID card, an enhanced official State personal ID card, a valid operator's or chauffeur's license, or an enhanced driver license.

Additionally, the Law prohibits an individual from using the electronic voter registration interface if the individual meets any of the following conditions:

- The individual orders a duplicate of an operator's or chauffeur's license, an enhanced driver license, an official State personal ID card, or an enhanced official State personal ID card the same day as submitting an electronic voter registration application.
- The individual submits a change of address for an operator's or chauffeur's license, an enhanced driver license, an official State personal ID card, or an enhanced official State personal ID card within the 10 days before submitting an electronic voter registration application.
- The individual has an expired operator's or chauffeur's license, an expired enhanced driver license, an expired official State personal ID card, or an expired enhanced official State personal ID card.

The bill deletes the eligibility requirements and the prohibitions described above. Instead, it allows an applicant to register through the interface in the manner described below.

Proposed Requirements for Electronic Voter Registration

To authenticate the identity of a voter registration applicant submitting an electronic voter registration application through the interface, the voter registration applicant must provide one of the following:

- The identification number for the applicant on a valid operator's or chauffeur's license.
- The identification number for the applicant on a valid official State personal ID card.
- The identification number for an applicant on an enhanced driver license.
- The identification number for an applicant on an enhanced official State personal ID card.
- The last four digits of a valid Social Security number for the applicant if the applicant does not have an identification number for an identification as provided above.

If a voter registration applicant does not have an identification number for an identification as provided above, and that voter registration applicant submits a voter registration application that provides the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number, the electronic voter registration interface will have to do the following:

- Authenticate the identity of the applicant under a process developed by the SOS that verifies the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number, the applicant's full name, and the applicant's date of birth.
- Except as otherwise provided below, require the applicant's assent to use the applicant's most recent digitized signature contained in the Qualified Voter File (QVF).

Submitting and Updating an Applicant's Signature

If a digitized signature for a voter registration applicant is not contained in the QVF, the voter registration applicant will have to electronically submit an image of the applicant's signature through the electronic voter registration interface and assent to the use of this signature image as the applicant's signature for voter registration purposes. The SOS must develop a process for a voter registration applicant as described above to electronically submit a high-quality digitized image of the applicant's signature through the electronic voter registration interface, as well as a process for transmitting the digitized image of that applicant's signature to the QVF.

A registered elector who wishes to provide a new or additional signature for the registered elector's registration record may utilize the electronic voter registration interface to submit electronically an image of the registered elector's signature and assent to the use of that signature image as the registered elector's signature for voter registration purposes. The

registered elector must have the registered elector's identity authenticated under the procedures described above before the image of the registered elector's signature can be accepted for inclusion in the QVF. The registered elector must submit the image of the registered elector's signature using the process developed by the SOS.

MCL 168.509ii

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

The bill offers prospective voters a secure alternative to traditional forms of identification when registering to vote. To receive a Michigan driver's license or official State ID card, an individual must visit an SOS office to apply in-person. This requirement may prevent some individuals, including elderly or disabled voters, as well as individuals without reliable transportation, from receiving a traditional form of identification. Additionally, some individuals may have no need for a driver's license or official State ID card. Requiring them to receive one just to register to vote may be burdensome. The bill allows such individuals to verify their identify for voter registration purposes by using the last four digits of their Social Security number. The last four digits of a Social Security number are commonly used for other types of verification, such as when applying for a driver's license, United States passport, or Medicare coverage. The bill expands identification for voter registration purposes, making it more accessible.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill may have a minimal fiscal impact on the Department of State due to programming costs associated with the proposed changes; however, the Department's annual appropriations should be sufficient to absorb any additional costs.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco, Jr.

SAS\S2324\s594ea

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.