

Legislative Analysis



PROHIBITION ON SENDING UNSOLICITED ABSENT VOTER BALLOT APPLICATIONS

Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 5268 (proposed substitute H-3)

Sponsor: Rep. Julie Calley

Committee: Elections and Ethics

Complete to 10-5-21

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5268 would amend the Michigan Election Law to prohibit a county, city, or township clerk from sending an absent voter (AV) ballot application to an elector unless the elector has requested an AV ballot in person or in writing by mail, email, or fax from that clerk or has requested to be placed on the city's or township's permanent AV application list. The bill also would prohibit the secretary of state from sending an AV ballot application to an elector. Under the bill, AV ballot applications could not be sent out or made available to electors more than 75 days before an election.

MCL 168.759

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would result in cost savings for the state and certain county, city, and township governments by prohibiting the secretary of state and local government clerks from sending absent voter ballot applications that they may have sent otherwise. The prohibition would thereby preclude the payment of costs of printing, mailing materials, and postage associated with the mailings. Current law does not require clerks to send unsolicited absent voter ballot applications and instead leaves it to the discretion of the clerks. The bill therefore would result in savings only for those local governments in which the clerks would have opted to send unsolicited applications and for the state if the secretary of state would have opted to send unsolicited applications. The amount of savings these government units would realize would depend on the number of mailings they would have sent to their registered electors.

In 2020, the Department of State set aside \$4.2 million in federal funding to support the mailing of absent voter ballot applications to each of Michigan's 7.7 million registered electors, at a rate of approximately \$0.55 per mailing. The average number of registered electors per township is approximately 3,000.

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