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CHANGE PETITION REQUIREMENTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES

House Bill 6003 as enrolled
Public Act 491 of 2000
Sponsor: Rep. Michael Bishop

Second Analysis (1-3-01)
House Committee: Constitutional Law and
Ethics
Senate Committee: Government
Operations (discharged)

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Public Act 218 of 1999 (enrolled House Bill 5060) changed petition signature requirements for a number of state elective offices by tying them to a sliding scale based on the population of the election district in question. The petition signature requirements were made uniform for all candidates through a chart that was added to the Michigan Election Law under Section 544f. However, two types of candidates weren't included in Public Act 218: partisan candidates for Congressional office and independent candidates without partisan political party affiliation.

Currently, nominating petitions for political party Congressional candidates (and qualifying petitions for independent candidates for elective office) must be signed by a certain number of signatures as specified in the Michigan Election Law. Nominating petitions for a political party's candidate for United States senator or representative must be signed by a number of qualified and registered electors living in the state that equals at least one percent and not more than two percent of the number of votes cast by the party for secretary of state at the last general November election in which the secretary of state was elected.

Legislation has been introduced to include partisan Congressional candidates under the new petition signature requirements of Public Act 218 of 1999.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to delete the current signature requirements for nominating petitions for Congressional candidates. Instead, the bill would require that the number of

signatures on nominating petitions be as determined by Section 544f of the law (MCL 168.544f), which provides a chart that determines the number of signatures of qualified and registered electors necessary for nominating petitions based on the population of the district according to the most recent federal census.

MCL 168.93

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no fiscal implications. (10-2-00)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would correct an oversight that occurred when legislation was enacted last year that, among other things, standardized petition signature requirements for statewide officers (governor, secretary of state, attorney general), state legislators, and judgeships by tying the number of signatures required to a chart based on federal census information. Prior to Public Act 218 of 1999, petition requirements for partisan offices were based on the number of votes cast for each party's candidate for secretary of state, and so requirements for candidates of different parties could vary widely, depending on the relative strength of the party's showing in the secretary of state's election. The 1999 amendment to the Michigan election law standardized

petition requirements for candidates for state offices, and the bill would do the same for Congressional candidates.

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#This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.