

ABSENTEE VOTER MUST ACKNOWLEDGE ASSISTANCE

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House Bill 6028

Sponsor: Rep. Ruth Johnson

Committee: Local Government and Urban Policy

Complete to 6-28-04

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 6028 AS INTRODUCED 6-17-04

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to ensure that an elector who received assistance in marking an absentee ballot acknowledge that assistance by signing a statement on the back of the envelope that encloses the ballot.

Currently under the law, the back of an envelope that encloses an absentee ballot has a statement that an elector signs to assert that he or she is a qualified and registered elector, and is returning the ballot personally. (An absent voter who knowingly makes a false statement is guilty of a misdemeanor.) Further, if the voter is assisted in voting by another person, the person providing the assistance signs a statement that he or she assisted the elector to vote, "pursuant to his or her directions," and that the "ballot was inserted in the return envelope without being exhibited to any other person." (If the person who assists the elector knowingly makes a false statement, then he or she is guilty of a felony.) House Bill 6028 would retain both of these provisions, but add that the person who assisted the elector did so "according to his or her directions and in his or her physical presence." Further, the bill would require the elector to acknowledge that assistance, and sign a statement that would read:

"I hereby acknowledge that I was assisted in marking this ballot by the above named person who was in my physical presence when I marked the ballot."

Finally, the bill would eliminate an out-of-date provision concerning voter ballot envelope stock purchased before March 28, 1996.

MCL 168.761

Legislative Analyst: J. Hunault

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