

"NO REASON" ABSENTEE BALLOTS

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House Bill 4097

Sponsor: Rep. Martin Griffin

Committee: Ethics and Elections

Complete to 3-31-09

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4097 AS INTRODUCED 1-22-09

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to allow a voter to obtain an absent voter ballot without requiring a justification when making application for the ballot. A brief description of the bill follows.

Currently under the law, the definition of an 'absent voter' refers to a qualified and registered elector who meets one or more of six requirements: has a physical disability and requires assistance when attending the polls; has religious tenets that prohibit attendance at the polls; is an election precinct inspector in another precinct; is 60 years of age or older; will be absent from home on election day; or cannot attend the polls because of being in jail awaiting arraignment or trial. House Bill 4097 would eliminate these requirements. (The bill would define 'absent voter' to mean "a qualified and registered elector who votes without attending the polls on the day of an election.")

Currently the law requires that the form (called an application) that a voter completes to request an absent voter ballot include, among other things, a list of the statutory grounds (i.e., the six criteria listed above) for which an absentee ballot can be requested. A voter making application then checks the criterion that applies. House Bill 4097 would eliminate this provision of the law. An absent voter ballot application form would continue to require that a voter fill in the date of the election, his or her name, precinct, township or city, county, address to which the absent ballot should be sent, and a signature certifying the accuracy of the statements in the application.

MCL 168.758 et al

FISCAL IMPACT:

There would be no fiscal impact on state government. There would be additional mailing costs to local units of government if more voters requested absent voter ballots.

Legislative Analyst: J. Hunault

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