

HOUSE BILL No. 4448

March 5, 1997, Introduced by Reps. Dobronski, Hanley, Willard, Freeman, Wallace, Thomas, Harder, Baird, Kaza, Baade, Callahan, Hammerstrom, Dobb, Parks, Hale, Martinez, Cherry, DeHart, Bogardus, Griffin, Gire, Tesanovich, Schermesser, Dalman, Raczkowski, Schauer, Gubow, Scott, Brater, Wetters and McBryde and referred to the Committee on Local Government.

A bill to amend 1954 PA 116, entitled
"Michigan election law,"
by amending sections 758, 759, and 759b (MCL 168.758, 168.759,
168.759b), section 758 as amended by 1996 PA 207 and section 759
as amended by 1995 PA 261.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 Sec. 758. ~~—(1) For the purposes of this act, "absent voter"~~
2 ~~means a qualified and registered elector who meets 1 or more of~~
3 ~~the following requirements:~~
4 ~~(a) On account of physical disability, cannot without~~
5 ~~another's assistance attend the polls on the day of an election.~~
6 ~~(b) On account of the tenets of his or her religion, cannot~~
7 ~~attend the polls on the day of election.~~

1 ~~(c) Cannot attend the polls on the day of an election in the~~
2 ~~precinct in which he or she resides because of being an election~~
3 ~~precinct inspector in another precinct.~~

4 ~~(d) Is 60 years of age or older.~~

5 ~~(e) Is absent or expects to be absent from the township or~~
6 ~~city in which he or she resides during the entire period the~~
7 ~~polls are open for voting on the day of an election.~~

8 ~~(f) Cannot attend the polls on election day because of being~~
9 ~~confined in jail awaiting arraignment or trial.~~

10 ~~(1) (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to~~ AS USED IN THIS
11 ACT, "ABSENT VOTER" MEANS A QUALIFIED AND REGISTERED ELECTOR WHO
12 WISHES TO VOTE WITHOUT ATTENDING THE POLLS ON THE DAY OF AN
13 ELECTION. ABSENT VOTER DOES NOT INCLUDE a person who has moved
14 outside of this state, regardless of length of his or her resi-
15 dence outside of this state, and who no longer maintains an
16 actual residence in this state. The storage of personal effects
17 or household goods, the ownership of property that is rented or
18 leased to others, or occasional brief visits to a former domicile
19 in this state while residing outside of this state for most of
20 the year does not constitute a residence for voting purposes in
21 this state, except for each of the following:

22 (a) A person described in section 1 of article II of the
23 state constitution of 1963 and statutes enacted under that
24 section.

25 (b) A person described in section 759a.

26 Sec. 759. (1) At any time during the 75 days before a
27 primary or special primary, but not later than 2 p.m. of the

1 Saturday immediately before the primary or special primary, an
2 elector who qualifies to vote as an absent voter, as defined in
3 section 758, may apply for an absent voter ballot. The elector
4 shall apply in person or by mail with the clerk of the township,
5 city, or village in which the elector is registered. An applica-
6 tion received before a primary or special primary may be for
7 either that primary only, or for that primary and the election
8 that follows.

9 (2) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (1), at any
10 time during the 75 days before an election, but not later than 2
11 p.m. of the Saturday before the election, an elector who quali-
12 fies to vote as an absent voter, as defined in section 758, may
13 apply for an absent voter ballot. The elector shall apply in
14 person or by mail with the clerk of the township, city, or vil-
15 lage in which the voter is registered.

16 (3) An application for an absent voter ballot under this
17 section may be made in any of the following ways:

18 (a) By a written request signed by the ~~voter stating the~~
19 ~~statutory grounds for making the application~~ ELECTOR.

20 (b) On an absent voter ballot application form provided for
21 that purpose by the clerk of the city, township, or village.

22 (c) On a federal postcard application.

23 (4) An applicant for an absent voter ballot shall sign the
24 application. A clerk or assistant clerk shall not deliver an
25 absent voter ballot to an applicant who does not sign the
26 application. A person other than the applicant; a member of the
27 applicant's immediate family; a person residing in the

1 applicant's household; a person whose job normally includes the
 2 handling of mail, but only during the course of his or her
 3 employment; a registered elector requested by the applicant; or a
 4 clerk, assistant of the clerk, or other authorized election offi-
 5 cial shall not be in possession of a signed absent voter ballot
 6 application. A registered elector who is requested by the appli-
 7 cant to return his or her absent voter ballot application shall
 8 sign the certificate on the absent voter ballot application.

9 (5) The clerk of the city, township, or village shall have
 10 absent voter ballot application forms available in the office of
 11 the clerk at all times and shall furnish an absent voter ballot
 12 application form to anyone upon a verbal or written request. The
 13 absent voter ballot application shall be in substantially the
 14 following form:

15 "Application for absent voter ballot for:
 16

17 ☐ The primary or special primary election to be held
 18 on , 19... .

19 ☐ The election to be held on , 19... .

20 (Check applicable election or elections)

21 I, , a qualified and registered elector of
 22 the precinct of the township of or village
 23 of or of the ward of the city
 24 of , in the county of and state of
 25 Michigan, apply for an official ballot, or ballots, to be voted
 26 by me at the election or elections as requested in this
 27 application.

~~The statutory grounds on which I base my request are:~~

~~[] I expect to be absent from the community in which I am registered for the entire time the polls are open on election day.~~

~~[] I am physically unable to attend the polls without the assistance of another.~~

~~[] I cannot attend the polls because of the tenets of my religion.~~

~~[] I have been appointed an election precinct inspector in a precinct other than the precinct where I reside.~~

~~[] I am 60 years of age or older.~~

~~[] I cannot attend the polls because I am confined to jail awaiting arraignment or trial.~~

~~(Check applicable reason)~~

Send absent voter ballot to me at:

.....
(Street No. or R.R.)

.....
(Post Office) (State)

My registered address.....
(Street No. or R.R.)

.....
(Post Office) (State)

Date.....

I declare that the statements in this absent voter ballot application are true.

.....
(Signature)

WARNING

1 A person making a false statement in this absent voter
 2 ballot application is guilty of a misdemeanor. It is a violation
 3 of Michigan election law for a person other than those listed in
 4 the instructions to return, offer to return, agree to return, or
 5 solicit to return your absent voter ballot application to the
 6 clerk. An assistant authorized by the clerk who receives absent
 7 voter ballot applications at a location other than the office of
 8 the clerk must have credentials signed by the clerk. Ask to see
 9 his or her credentials before entrusting your application with a
 10 person claiming to have the clerk's authorization to return your
 11 application.

12 Certificate of Authorized Registered

13 Elector Returning Absent Voter

14 Ballot Application

15 I certify that my name is, my address
 16 is, and my date of birth is;
 17 that I am delivering the absent voter ballot application of
 18 at his or her request; that I did not
 19 solicit or request to return the application; that I have not
 20 made any markings on the application; that I have not altered the
 21 application in any way; that I have not influenced the applicant;
 22 and that I am aware that a false statement in this certificate is
 23 a violation of Michigan election law.

24 _____
 25 (Date) (Signature)"

26 (6) The following instructions for an applicant for an
 27 absent voter ballot shall be included with each application
 28 furnished an applicant:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS FOR ABSENT VOTER BALLOTS

Step 1. After completely filling out the application, sign and date the application in the place designated. Your signature must appear on the application or you will not receive an absent voter ballot.

Step 2. Deliver the application by 1 of the following methods:

(a) Place the application in an envelope addressed to the appropriate clerk and place the necessary postage upon the return envelope and deposit it in the United States mail or with another public postal service, express mail service, parcel post service, or common carrier.

(b) Deliver the application personally to the office of the clerk, to the clerk, or to an authorized assistant of the clerk.

(c) In either (a) or (b), a member of the immediate family of the voter including a father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild or a person residing in the voter's household may mail or deliver the application to the clerk for the applicant.

(d) In the event an applicant cannot return the application in any of the above methods, the applicant may select any registered elector to return the application. The person returning the application must sign and return the certificate at the bottom of the application.

(7) A person who prints and distributes absent voter ballot applications shall print on the application the warning,

1 certificate of authorized registered elector returning absent
2 voter ballot application, and instructions required by this
3 section.

4 (8) A person who makes a false statement in an absent voter
5 ballot application is guilty of a misdemeanor. A person who
6 forges a signature on an absent voter ballot application is
7 guilty of a felony. A person who is not authorized in this act
8 and who both distributes absent voter ballot applications to
9 absent voters and returns those absent voter ballot applications
10 to a clerk or assistant of the clerk is guilty of a misdemeanor.

11 Sec. 759b. (1) ~~Any~~ A registered elector may apply for AN
12 absent voter ~~ballots~~ BALLOT at any time ~~prior to~~ BEFORE 4
13 p.m. on election day if ~~he shall have become physically disabled~~
14 ~~or shall be absent from the city or township because of sickness~~
15 ~~or death in the family which~~ AN EVENT has occurred at a time
16 ~~which has~~ THAT made it impossible to apply for absent voter
17 ballots by the statutory deadline. The application shall be
18 called an emergency absent voter BALLOT application.

19 (2) Emergency absent voter BALLOT applications may be made
20 by letter or on a form provided by the clerk. The application
21 shall set forth that the voter is qualified to vote in the elec-
22 tion ~~, stating the statutory reason for applying for an emer-~~
23 ~~gency absent voter ballot~~ and that ~~the reason for applying~~
24 ~~after the statutory deadline~~ AN EVENT occurred at such a time to
25 make it impossible to file an application for AN absent voter
26 ~~ballots~~ BALLOT by the statutory deadline.

1 (3) ~~Any~~ A person intentionally making a false statement in
2 ~~such~~ AN EMERGENCY ABSENT VOTER BALLOT application is guilty of
3 a felony. ~~Any~~ A person aiding or abetting ~~any~~ ANOTHER person
4 to make a false statement ~~on such~~ IN AN EMERGENCY ABSENT VOTER
5 BALLOT application is guilty of a felony.

6 (4) Upon receipt by the clerk of a valid application for an
7 emergency absent voter ballot, the clerk may deliver the ABSENT
8 VOTER ballots to the applicant in person, through a deputy or an
9 election assistant, or ~~he may deliver them~~ at his OR HER office
10 to a person named by the applicant in the EMERGENCY ABSENT VOTER
11 BALLOT application. The ABSENT voter ~~may~~ SHALL return the bal-
12 lots to the clerk in the sealed envelope provided ~~therefor~~ FOR
13 THAT REASON. THE ABSENT VOTER MAY RETURN THE ABSENT VOTER BAL-
14 LOTS TO THE CLERK in any manner. ~~he sees fit. To~~ HOWEVER, TO
15 be valid, THE ABSENT VOTER ballots ~~must~~ SHALL be returned to
16 the clerk in time to be delivered to the polls ~~prior to~~ BEFORE
17 8 p.m. on election day.