

ELECTIONS: SUPER PRECINCT PILOT PROJECT

Mary Ann Cleary, Director
Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4878

Sponsor: Rep. Bradford C. Jacobsen

Committee: Elections and Ethics

Complete to 10-21-13

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4878 AS INTRODUCED 6-20-13

House Bill 4878 would amend the Michigan Election Law (MCL 168.509o et al.) to:

- Require the Secretary of State to establish a super precinct pilot project.
- Permit certain election precinct consolidations.
- Allow a city, township, or village to enter into an agreement with the county in which it is located or with another city, township, or village, for the clerk of the other jurisdiction to conduct certain election administration duties.
- Allow the Bureau of Elections to handle the qualified voter file list maintenance.

A more detailed description of the bill follows.

QVF List Maintenance

The bill requires that beginning January 1, 2014, the Secretary of State establish a pilot project to allow the state's Bureau of Elections to handle the qualified voter file (QVF) list maintenance.

Agreements for Administration of Elections

The bill specifies that a city, township, or village could enter into an agreement with the county in which it is located or with another city, township, or village, whereby the clerk of the other jurisdiction would conduct certain election administration duties, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- Distribute, receive, and process absent voter ballot applications and absent voter ballots.
- Electronically transmit or mail absent voter ballots to uniformed services voters or overseas voters.
- Process voter registrations in the qualified voter file.
- Maintain the qualified voter file street index.
- Conduct regular list maintenance of the qualified voter file.
- Purchase, maintain, and store voting equipment.
- Establish polling place locations.

Consolidation of Precincts

The bill would allow two adjoining cities or townships, each having only one voting precinct, to consolidate those precincts, if the election commissioners approved the

consolidation by adopting resolutions. The consolidated precinct could not have more than 2,999 registered electors. Further, the consolidated precinct would have to be created at least 60 days before an election so that the election commissioners (or other designated election officials) could give notice to voters, by doing the following:

- No later than 40 days before an election, provide notice of the consolidation and the location of the polling place for the newly combined precincts, with that notice provided by mail or another method designed to provide actual notice to the registered electors; and
- Post a written notice at each precinct polling place stating the location of the consolidated precinct polling place.

Pilot Project for Super Precincts

Beginning January 1, 2015, the Secretary of State would be required to establish a pilot project to test super precincts in Michigan and select the local units of government that would participate. A pilot project super precinct could not have more than 10,000 active registered electors.

Under the bill, a pilot project super precinct could only be used on a regular election date. Those dates in the Election Law are the fourth Tuesday in February; first Tuesday after the first Monday in May; the first Tuesday after the first Monday in August; and the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. However, House Bill 4878 prohibits a pilot project super precinct from being used at a November election in an even-numbered year (a "general November election") or the preceding August primary election.

The bill requires that each local election official selected by the Secretary of State to participate in the pilot project cooperate in testing the super precinct and do all of the following:

- No later than 40 days before an election, provide notice of the affected election precincts of the pilot project super voter precinct, and the location of the polling place or places for that election, with that notice provided by mail or another method designed to provide actual notice to the registered electors; and
- Post a written notice at each precinct polling place stating the location of the super voter precinct polling place.

The bill further specifies that a pilot project super precinct would have to be established at least 60 days before an election.

House Bill 4878 also specifies that if a pilot project super precinct is used in a local unit of government, a precinct polling place established under Section 662 shall not be used, unless the polling place has a secure electronic connection to provide voting information to, and voting information from, the qualified voter file. [Section 168.662 deals with the designation of places for voting by cities, villages, and townships.] Otherwise, each pilot project super voter precinct would be required to comply with all applicable provisions of the Michigan Election Law concerning polling places.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Department of State reports that the bill is not expected to pose significant costs for the department. Municipalities could realize savings through agreements that transferred certain election-related duties to county clerks.

Legislative Analyst: J. Hunault
Fiscal Analyst: Marilyn Peterson

■ 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.