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BILL ANALYSIS

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House Bill 4904 (as reported by the Committee of the Whole)
Sponsor: Representative Edward McBroom
House Committee: Elections
Senate Committee: Elections and Government Reform

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to include the date of a statewide presidential primary election as a regular election date. (The Law requires a statewide presidential primary election to be conducted on the second Tuesday in March in each presidential election year.)

The bill also specifies that Section 646a(3) of the Law, which governs local ballot deadlines, would apply to and control the filing deadlines for candidates for local offices to be elected at the general November election and for local ballot questions at any regular election, primary election, or special election. The bill includes a statement that Section 646a, as amended by the bill, "is curative and intended to correct any misinterpretation of legislative intent by the Michigan court of appeals...", and expresses legislative intent that Section 646a(3) as amended supersedes any conflicting provisions of law or charter prescribing filing deadlines for local candidates and ballot questions.

In addition, the bill would require the Board of State Canvassers to canvas the returns and determine the result of an election on a ballot question submitted to the electors of more than one county under the Regional Transit Authority Act.

MCL 168.641 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Suzanne Lowe

FISCAL IMPACT

Adding the presidential primary election date to the list of "regular election dates" would not result in new costs to the State, because the State incurs costs in years in which a presidential primary is held, regardless of whether it is considered a special, primary, or regular election, and the Law already requires a presidential primary to be held. The estimated cost for an election is approximately \$2,000 per precinct. With 5,200 precincts across the State, the estimated total cost is \$10.4 million. For FY 2015-16, \$10.0 million is appropriated to the Treasury Department for the 2016 presidential primary; however, the appropriation could fall short by approximately \$400,000 based on the costs of the May 2015 election for Proposal 1.

The bill could result in cost savings for local units of government as a presidential primary election would be considered a regular election date, which would allow a local unit to add any questions to that election. If the Legislature continued to appropriate funds for the primary election as has been done in the past, and for the upcoming 2016 primary election, local units could potentially realize savings of an estimated \$2,000 per precinct. There also could be a cost to local units for printing a third ballot (for local issues added to the election, in addition to the ballots for Republican presidential primary candidates and for Democratic presidential primary candidates; however, those costs would be negated by the savings.

The other amendments in the bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Date Completed: 11-5-15

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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