

Senate Bill 470 (as introduced 9-7-23)

*(Senate-passed version)*

Sponsor: Senator Paul Wojno

Committee: Elections and Ethics

Date Completed: 9-11-23

**CONTENT**

**The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to extend, from January 1, 2024, to September 1, 2025, the date after which uniformed service voters on active duty and members of the merchant marine may electronically return voted ballots. It also would extend the date accordingly for the Secretary of State's (SOS) implementation of these electronic returns.**

Among other things, the Michigan Election Law prescribes the rights of voters residing overseas to participate in United States elections. Currently, overseas voters may mail a voted absent voter ballot or Federal write-in absentee ballot to the appropriate city or township clerk to be counted.

Beginning January 1, 2024, a member of a uniformed service on active duty or a member of the merchant marine who is absent from the United States and does not expect to return to the residence where the member is qualified to vote may *electronically* return a voted absent voter ballot or Federal write-in absentee ballot to the appropriate city or township clerk to be counted. The Law requires the SOS to implement these and associated provisions and rules by January 1, 2024. The bill would extend these dates to September 1, 2025. Additionally, it would delete a provision specifying that the SOS must allow for the electronic return of voted ballots by eligible members starting no later than the 2024 Statewide presidential primary election.

(The "uniformed services" means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, or Coast Guard, the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service, the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a reserve component of a uniformed service, or the Michigan Army National Guard or Air National Guard.

A "member of the merchant marine" means an individual, other than a member of a uniformed service or an individual employed, enrolled, or maintained on the Great Lakes or the inland waterways, who is either of the following:

- Employed as an officer or crew member of a vessel documented under the laws of the United States, a vessel owned by the United States, or a vessel of foreign-flag registry under charter to or control of the United States.
- Enrolled with the United States for employment or training for employment or maintained by the United States for emergency relief service as an officer or crew member of a vessel documented under the laws of the United States, a vessel owned by the United States, or a vessel of foreign-flag registry under charter to or control of the United States.)

MCL 168.759a

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco, Jr.

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.