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House Bill 4569 (Substitute S-2 as reported)
Sponsor: Representative Betsy Coffia
House Committee: Elections
Senate Committee: Elections and Ethics

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to do the following:

- Modify the voter registration process to allow for preregistration of an applicant that was at least 16 years old but no older than 17 and a half.
- Specify the eligibility requirements for preregistration to vote.
- Prescribe the process for certain entities receiving preregistrations to transmit such information to the Qualified Voter File (QVF).
- Require the Secretary of State (SOS) to update and maintain certain preregistration information.
- Require the SOS and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to annually coordinate outreach and education on preregistration eligibility.
- Require preregistration information to be confidential.

The bill is tie-barred to House Bill 4983.

MCL 168.495 et al.

BRIEF RATIONALE

Generally, youth turnout for elections is low. During the 2022 midterms, the average voter turnout among youth (ages 18-29) across the nation was 23%.¹ Michigan had the highest youth voter turnout across the country that year, at 35.5%; however, this was still less than half of the State's eligible 18-year-old to 29-year-old voters.² Some attribute low turnout to confusion about the registration process, the fact that 17- and 18-year-olds often do not have to visit the Secretary of State (SOS) at their age, and an overall lack of interest. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the State allow 16- and 17-year-olds to preregister to vote.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill could have a negative fiscal impact on the Department of State. Costs for the Department to notify eligible teens ages 16 to 17 and half years old who apply for a State operator's license or State identification card should be minimal and absorbable within Department appropriations.

The average cost to mail a postcard is estimated at 32 cents per parcel. According to the Federal Highway Administration, there were 173,000 licensed Michigan drivers between the

¹ Tufts University Center for Information & Research on Civil Learning and Engagement, *State-by-State Youth Voter Turnout Data & the Impact of Election Laws in 2022*, April 6, 2023.

² *Id.*

ages of 16 and 18, and these would be eligible for the mailing. Thus, the estimated cost to mail notifications to 173,000 individuals would be \$55,400. The number of individual ages 16 through 18 with only a State identification card is not available but the number should be substantially below the 173,000 licensed drivers of the same age and thus would be a marginal addition to the estimated mailing cost.

The bill would increase administrative costs for the MDE to coordinate with the SOS to provide outreach and ensure preregistration materials are made available to eligible pupils. This would likely require additional staff for coordinating and appropriations for producing materials. The final costs would depend on how costs would be shared between the SOS and the MDE.

Local high schools would experience a minimal fiscal impact to ensure that preregistration materials were made available to eligible students. Costs would be supported with existing appropriations and staff.

Date Completed: 11-2-23

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