

MICHIGAN ELECTION LAW (EXCERPT)
Act 116 of 1954

168.764a Instructions for absent voters and absent uniformed services voters or overseas voters.

Sec. 764a. (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), the following instructions for an absent voter must be included with each ballot or set of ballots furnished an absent voter:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ABSENT VOTERS

Step 1. Enclosed you will find voting instructions as to the method of voting. Read these carefully and then vote the ballot.

Step 2. After voting a ballot, place the ballot in the secrecy sleeve, if any. If a secrecy sleeve is not provided, refold the ballot to conceal your votes.

Step 3. If, after voting your absent voter ballot, you wish to take your marked absent voter ballot to your polling place on election day, or to an early voting site during the early voting period, to personally put your marked absent voter ballot into a tabulator to be counted, skip Steps 4 to 7 and proceed to Step 8. If you do not proceed to Step 8, and you wish to return your marked absent voter ballot to the clerk, proceed to Steps 4 to 7.

Step 4. Place the ballot or ballots in the return envelope and securely seal the return envelope.

Step 5. Sign and date the return envelope in the place designated. Your signature must appear on the return envelope or the ballot will not be counted. If you are disabled or otherwise unable to mark the ballot and required assistance in voting your absent voter ballot, have the individual who assisted you complete the section on the return envelope entitled "TO BE COMPLETED ONLY IF VOTER IS ASSISTED IN VOTING BY ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL".

Step 6. Deliver the return envelope by 1 of the following methods:

(a) Deposit the postage prepaid return envelope in the United States mail, or place the necessary postage on the return envelope and deposit the return envelope with another public postal service, express mail service, parcel post service, or common carrier.

(b) Deliver the return envelope personally to the office of the clerk, to the clerk, or to an authorized assistant of the clerk, or to a secure drop box located in the city or township.

(c) In either (a) or (b), a member of your immediate family including a father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild or an individual residing in your household may mail or deliver a ballot to the clerk for you.

(d) You may request by telephone that the clerk who issued the ballot provide assistance in returning the ballot. The clerk is required to provide assistance if you are unable to return your absent voter ballot as specified in (a), (b), or (c) above, if it is before 5 p.m. on the Friday immediately preceding the election, and if you are asking the clerk to pick up the absent voter ballot within the jurisdictional limits of the city, township, or village in which you are registered. Your absent voter ballot will then be picked up by the clerk or an election assistant sent by the clerk. All individuals authorized to pick up absent voter ballots are required to carry credentials issued by the clerk. If using this absent voter ballot return method, do not give your ballot to anyone until you have checked that individual's credentials.

Step 7. The ballot must reach the clerk or an authorized assistant of the clerk before the close of the polls on election day. An absent voter ballot received by the clerk or assistant of the clerk after the close of the polls on election day will not be counted.

Step 8. This step applies only if, after marking your absent voter ballot, you wish to take your marked absent voter ballot to your polling place on election day, or to an early voting site during the early voting period, to personally put your marked ballot into a tabulator to be counted. Bring your marked absent voter ballot that you placed in the secrecy sleeve under Step 2 to your polling place on election day, or to an early voting site during the early voting period, and indicate to the election inspectors that you are there to put your marked absent voter ballot into the tabulator to be counted. Before tabulating your ballot, you will be required to provide identification for election purposes to the election inspectors, or sign an affidavit that you do not have identification for election purposes, and complete the ballot application.

WARNING

All of the following actions are violations of the Michigan election law and are illegal in this state:

(1) To vote an absent voter ballot at a meeting or gathering at which other individuals are voting absent voter ballots.

(2) For an individual who is assisting an absent voter in marking the ballot to suggest or in any manner attempt to influence the absent voter on how that absent voter should vote.

(3) For an individual who is present and knows that an individual is voting an absent voter ballot to suggest

or in any manner attempt to influence the absent voter on how that absent voter should vote.

(4) For an individual other than those listed in these instructions to return, offer to return, agree to return, or solicit to return an absent voter ballot to the clerk.

(5) For an individual other than the absent voter; an individual listed in these instructions; or an individual whose job it is to handle mail before, during, or after being transported by a public postal service, express mail service, parcel post service, or common carrier, but only during the normal course of the individual's employment to be in possession of a voted or unvoted absent voter ballot.

(2) The following instruction must be included with the instructions as provided in subsection (1) for each absent voter ballot furnished to an absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter:

"For an absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter, the absent voter ballot return envelope containing a marked absent voter ballot must be postmarked on or before election day and must reach the clerk or authorized assistant of the clerk within 6 days after the election. If the absent voter ballot return envelope containing an absent voter ballot for an absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter is received by mail by the clerk or authorized assistant of the clerk more than 6 days after the election or is postmarked after election day, the absent voter ballot will not be counted."

(3) If a city or township with 250 or more precincts that are subject to the exemption in section 765a(1) is unable to program an election day tabulator to accept an absent voter ballot in any election in an election year, the appropriate city or township clerk shall provide a modified version of the instructions for absent voters under subsection (1) that removes the ability of an elector to return the elector's marked absent voter ballot to the elector's election day polling place to be tabulated.

History: Add. 1982, Act 201, Imd. Eff. July 1, 1982;—Am. 1995, Act 261, Eff. Mar. 28, 1996;—Am. 1996, Act 207, Imd. Eff. May 21, 1996;—Am. 2012, Act 128, Imd. Eff. May 14, 2012;—Am. 2020, Act 177, Imd. Eff. Oct. 6, 2020;—Am. 2023, Act 25, Imd. Eff. May 1, 2023;—Am. 2023, Act 81, Eff. Feb. 13, 2024.

Popular name: Election Code