

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2016 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Ethics and Elections

SB 112 — Absentee Voting

by Senator Thompson

The bill (Chapter 2016-37, L.O.F.) changes the phrase “absentee” to “vote-by-mail” where it appears in the Florida Statutes, most frequently in the context of the phrase “absentee ballot(s).” The bill addresses possible confusion on the part of voters who mistakenly believe that they must be away from home, or “absent,” in order to request and cast a ballot remotely — notwithstanding that Florida did away with that requirement years ago.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect on July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 34-0; House 117-0

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CS/CS/SB 514 — Supervisor of Elections Salaries

by Community Affairs Committee; Ethics and Elections Committee; and Senator Richter

The bill addresses the base salaries and group rates used to calculate the salary of Florida's supervisors of elections. A supervisor's salary is determined by the size of the population served. This bill makes the base salaries and group rates used to calculate a supervisor's salary the same as the current base salaries and group rates used to calculate the salaries of the clerks of circuit court, property appraisers, and tax collectors.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect on October 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 36-4; House 58-54

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HB 541 — Addresses of Legal Residence

by Reps. Spano, Murphy, and others (CS/CS/SB 744 by Community Affairs Committee; Ethics and Elections Committee; and Senator Bean)

The bill (Chapter 2016-23, L.O.F.) defines “address of legal residence” to include distinguishing apartment numbers, suite numbers, lot numbers, room numbers, and dorm room numbers or other identifiers. The bill requires voter registration applications to contain the applicant’s address of legal residence, including an apartment, suite, lot, room, dormitory room number, or other appropriate identifier. The bill states that failure to provide a distinguishing apartment, suite, lot, room, or dormitory room number or other identifier on a voter registration application does not impact a voter’s eligibility to register to vote or to cast a ballot. The bill also provides that failure to provide a distinguishing apartment, suite, lot, room, or dormitory room number or other identifier on a voter registration application may not serve as the basis for a challenge to a voter’s eligibility or reason to not count a ballot.

Additionally, supervisors of elections are required to include within their list of valid residential street addresses all information necessary to distinguish residences including a distinguishing apartment, suite, lot, room, or dormitory room number, or other identifier. The bill also requires supervisors of elections to make all reasonable efforts to obtain differentiating information if a voter registration application does not include such information.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 34-0; House 119-0

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SB 666 — Voter Identification

by Senator Legg

The bill allows three new forms of identification to be used for the purposes of voter registration and identification at the polls. Specifically, it allows a voter to use his or her Florida concealed weapon or firearm license, a Veteran Health Identification Card issued by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, or an employee identification card issued by any part of the federal, state, county, or municipal government.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 110-0

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SB 7076 — Legislature

by Ethics and Elections Committee

The bill provides that the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature will convene on January 9, 2018.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 27-11; House 89-28