

HOUSE MESSAGE SUMMARY

Date: April 16, 1998

Bill Subject: Election integrity; absentee voting; voter registration

Prepared By: Senate Committee on Executive Business, Ethics and Elections

I. Amendments Contained in Message

House Amendment 1 -- R253073 (body with title)

II. Summary of Amendments Contained in Message

House Amendment 1 makes the following changes to the Senate bill:

- Revises the provisions relating to registering to vote where a person is granted a homestead exemption: requires the supervisor to forward to the property appraiser names of persons registering to vote at an address other than where homestead is claimed; requires the property appraiser to examine each such referral and if the person is not entitled to the exemption, to terminate the homestead and assess back taxes.
- Reduces the witnessing requirement for absentee ballots to notary or other officer entitled to administer oaths or *one witness* who is a registered voter in the state.
- Allows for absentee ballot coordinators designated by political parties. These coordinators may witness an unlimited number of absentee ballots; request ballots on behalf of registered voters, either in writing or by telephone; and return an unlimited number of voted ballots to the supervisor of elections. Each political party may designate a number of coordinators for a general or special election equal to twice the number of House districts, all or part of which lie within the county.
- Retains current law provision allowing one request for an absentee ballot to be good for a calendar year, unless the voter indicates otherwise.
- Requires an absentee voter to place the last four digits of his or her social security number on the Voter's Certificate.
- Allows 17 year olds, who have preregistered to vote, to work at the polls on election day.

- Changes some of the penalty provisions. Reduces penalties for witnessing more than 5 ballots, returning more than 2 voted ballots and making a false declaration to secure assistance from third degree felonies to first degree misdemeanors; enhances penalties for giving something of value to a person for registering to vote, for soliciting or paying a person to solicit voter registrations for compensation and for an election official or employee attempting to interfere or influence a voter to third degree felonies; and enhances subsequent convictions of corruptly influencing a person in registering or voting to a second degree felony.
- Requires a charter county that wishes to change the terms of office of its governing board to have that change approved by referendum of the voters.
- Requires the supervisor to post a notice at each polling place regarding penalties for committing fraud in connection with voting.
- Allows supervisors of elections and certain election employees to administer oaths provided in the election code.
- Removes the appropriation.