

HCS HB 199 -- OBSOLETE ELECTION STATUTES

SPONSOR: Dugger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass by Consent" by the Committee on Elections by a vote of 11 to 0.

This substitute repeals obsolete statutes regarding elections. In its main provisions, the substitute:

(1) Repeals the provision that prohibits a voting machine from being used unless it permits each voter at a presidential election to vote by the use of a single lever for the candidates of one party or group of petitioners for President, Vice President, and their presidential electors (Section 115.249);

(2) Repeals the provision that requires a voting machine to be placed so that the ballot labels can be plainly seen by the election judges when not in use by voters (Section 115.259);

(3) Repeals the provision requiring that the words "Official Absentee Ballot" appear at the top of an absentee ballot (Section 115.281);

(4) Changes the composition of a team to count absentee ballots from four election judges consisting of two from each political party to an equal number of judges from each major political party (Section 115.299);

(5) Repeals the provision prohibiting absentee ballots from being counted by the same persons as those who removed them from their envelopes (Section 115.300);

(6) Repeals the provision allowing the use of pasters to add or delete names on printed ballots (Section 115.383);

(7) Removes ballot labels from the list of items that the election authority must deliver to each polling place before the poll opens (Section 115.419);

(8) Changes when election judges must open the ballot box and show to all present that it is empty from after the time fixed by law for the opening of the polls but before the voting begins to not more than one hour before the voting begins (Section 115.423);

(9) Removes ballot cards from the type of ballots that election judges must initial after the voter's identification certificate has been initialed (Section 115.433);

(10) Removes sealing the envelope containing a ballot from the list of responsibilities that election judges must perform when any physically disabled voter is unable to enter the polling place (Section 115.436);

(11) Repeals the provision that allows a voter to cross out a name that appears on the ballot and write the name of the person for whom he or she wishes to vote above or below the crossed-out name and place a cross X mark in the square directly to the left of the crossed-out name but allows a voter to write the name of the person for whom he or she wishes to vote on the write-in line if the line appears on the ballot and place a valid mark immediately beside the candidate's name. The substitute repeals the provisions allowing the use of a sticker or other item containing a write-in candidate's name in lieu of a handwritten name (Section 115.439);

(12) Repeals the provision requiring the ballot to be strung on a wire or string in the order read after all of the proper votes on a ballot have been counted (Section 115.449);

(13) Repeals the provisions regarding the responsibility of the election authority in counting ballots cast using punch card voting systems and repeals the provision allowing a voter to use write-in stickers on ballots (Section 115.456); and

(14) Extends the time period that specified election ballots, records, and materials must be kept from 12 months to 22 months (Section 115.493).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill is necessary to remove obsolete election statutes, most of which are not currently enforced because of alternative vote counting technologies. The bill will make the election process more efficient.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dugger; and Missouri Association of County Clerks.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.