

HCS SCS SBs 34 & 105 -- MILITARY, OVERSEAS, AND ABSENTEE VOTING

This bill allows a covered voter, as specified in the bill, who has been discharged from military service, has returned from a military deployment or activation, or has separated from employment outside of the United States after the voter registration deadline and who is otherwise qualified to register to vote in an election in person before the election authority until 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before an election if he or she can show sufficient evidence of qualifying for late registration.

Currently, certain military and overseas voters who are not registered to vote are only permitted to vote in elections for federal offices. The bill allows any covered voter to also vote in elections for statewide offices, state legislative offices, or statewide ballot initiatives by submitting a federal postcard application to apply to vote by absentee ballot or by submitting a federal postcard application at the polling place even though the individual is not registered. A federal postcard application must also serve as a voter registration application and the election authority must, if satisfied that the applicant is entitled to register, place the voter's name on the voter registration file.

An application for a military-overseas ballot must be deemed timely if it is received by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday, instead of by 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday, prior to the election.

The bill allows participants in the Address Confidentiality Program established under Sections 589.660 to 589.681, RSMo, to vote by absentee ballot if they have safety concerns.

The provisions of the bill regarding participants in the Address Confidentiality Program contain an emergency clause and will become effective on July 1, 2015, or upon its passage and approval, whichever occurs first.