

HB 2531 -- ELECTIONS

SPONSOR: Kelley (127)

This bill changes election laws. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Requires election authorities to enter voter history in their computerized registration system and forward such information to the Missouri Voter Registration System by the time required for election certification (Section 115.157, RSMo);

(2) Beginning January 1, 2023, the bill requires the use of a paper ballot and repeals electronic voting system language with certain exceptions for voting equipment used for the disabled. Requires local election authorities to be members of the Center for Internet Security and allows the Secretary of State (SOS) to review cyber security for local election authorities and vendors as specified in the bill. Testing of vendor products such as programs and machines is allowed and subject to appropriation (Sections 115.225, 115.237, and 115.417);

(3) Requires the use of antifraud countermeasures in ballots printed after January 1, 2023 and specifies certain antifraud measures that will be used (Section 115.247);

(4) Allows the use of mail-in ballots by administrative or executive order only and repeals a currently expired exception to absentee ballot processing rules and an exception allowing mail-in voting which were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic (Section 115.302);

(5) Requires use of photographic identification for purposes of voting in-person absentee ballots at an election authority site that is a designated polling place (Sections 115.257 and 115.427);

(6) Authorizes the use of provisional ballots in cases where a voter appears without identification which may be verified and counted by use of either photographic identification or signature matching and repeals an affidavit requirement that was declared unconstitutional in *Priorities U.S.A., et. al. v. State of Missouri* (Mo. 2020) (Section 115.427);

(7) Requires the retention of ballots in all elections for one year from the date of certification in a secure location. Intentional destruction or tampering with such ballots will be a class one election offense (Section 115.449);

(8) Creates the "Federal Election Fund" which will hold all federal monies allocated for conducting elections. Money in the

fund is subject to appropriation by the General Assembly in the same manner as other funds. If federal money is not subject to legislative appropriation, then it stands automatically refused by Missouri (Section 115.1550);

(9) Requires all federal laws relating to election security procedures, voter identification, and voter fraud to be subject to review by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules prior to implementation via the standard rulemaking process (Section 115.1552); and

(10) Requires all agencies of the state or its political subdivisions to provide notice to the Governor, the President Pro Tem and Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives of any communications received from the federal government relating to elections or the implementation of federal election laws (Section 115.1554).