

STORAGE NAME: h0917.er

DATE: March 6, 2000

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON
ELECTION REFORM
ANALYSIS**

BILL #: HB 917

RELATING TO: Elections

SPONSOR(S): Representative Stafford

TIED BILL(S):

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

- (1) ELECTION REFORM (PRC)
 - (2) GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS (PRC)
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
-

I. SUMMARY:

HB 917 provides an alternative method for in-person voting of an absentee ballot by allowing a voter the option of placing the voted ballot directly into a vote tabulation device in lieu of using the absentee mailing envelope. The absentee voter must present an acceptable form of picture identification, complete an In-Office Voter Certificate, vote the ballot, and place the ballot in a vote tabulation device. The results or tabulation may not be made before the close of the polls on election day.

The bill reduces the composition of the election board required to be located in each precinct.

Additionally, the bill requires a deputy sheriff to be present at each polling place in lieu of each precinct as currently required by law.

Finally, the bill eliminates the requirement that the Supervisors of Elections (Supervisor) hold formal training classes for poll workers. This allows the Supervisor the flexibility to provide training in a manner which would best serve the poll workers.

This bill does not have a fiscal impact on state or local governments.

This bill has an effective date of July 1, 2000.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. DOES THE BILL SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>Less Government</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. <u>Lower Taxes</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. <u>Individual Freedom</u> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. <u>Personal Responsibility</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. <u>Family Empowerment</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

For any principle that received a "no" above, please explain:

B. PRESENT SITUATION:

Absentee Ballots

Current law provides a registered voter the opportunity to vote an absentee ballot in-person in the office, and under the supervision, of the Supervisor of Elections. The voter must present a valid picture identification card prior to receiving the absentee ballot [See generally, s. 101.657, F.S.]. The voter receives the ballot including a secrecy envelope and a mailing envelope, votes the ballot, encloses the ballot in the envelope provided, signs the Voter's Certificate and gives the ballot to the Supervisor for presentation to the Canvassing Board.

Election Boards, Deputy Sheriffs, and Poll Worker Training

Section 102.012(1), F.S., requires the Supervisor to provide two election boards consisting of three inspectors and one clerk for each precinct in which an election is to be conducted. Subsection (1) further grants the Supervisor authority to provide for only one election board if the Supervisor believes only one is necessary. Moreover, s. 102.012(5), F.S., provides that the Supervisor shall appoint additional election boards necessary to conduct an election if a precinct has more than 1000 registered voters, while s. 102.012(6), F.S., requires the need for only one election board if the precinct has fewer than 300 registered voters.

Section 102.021, F.S., provides that each Supervisor is required to provide formal poll worker training to inspectors, clerks, and deputy sheriffs. In addition, s. 102.031, F.S., provides that each precinct is required to have a deputy sheriff to maintain good order at the polls. Many counties, however, have several precincts located at one polling place, thereby having more deputy sheriffs than needed to fulfill this requirement.

C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Absentee Ballots

HB 917 provides an alternative means of voting an in-person absentee ballot. A person choosing to vote an absentee ballot in-person and in the office of the Supervisor will have the option to place the voted ballot directly into a vote tabulation device in lieu of using the secrecy and mailing envelopes. Since the ballot was voted in-person and under the supervision of the Supervisor, this bill allows the vote to be recorded on the vote tabulation device in lieu of being presented to the Canvassing Board. This follows the same process currently performed at the polling place. The results or tabulation of votes may not be made prior to the close of polls on election day.

Election Boards, Deputy Sheriffs, and Poll Worker Training

HB 917 reduces the number of inspectors required to compose an election board from three to two members. Additionally, Supervisors of Elections will have the flexibility to decide the best manner of training poll workers by removing the requirement that formal training classes be held. Finally, the bill removes the requirement that a deputy sheriff be stationed at each precinct, by instead requiring a deputy at each polling place.

D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

Section 1. Amends s. 101.657, F.S., to provide an alternative means of voting an in-person absentee ballot at the Supervisor's office. The voter may appear at the Supervisor's office, and upon providing picture identification and signing an In-Office Voter Certificate, receive the ballot, vote the ballot, and place the ballot in a voting tabulation device. The results or tabulation of the votes may not be done before the close of the polls on election day. Challenges to in-person absentee voters are conducted in the same manner as challenges to voters at the polls during election day, except that the absentee ballot is submitted to the Canvassing Board for determination by majority vote of the ballot's authenticity.

Section 2. Amends s. 102.012, F.S., to provide a reduction in the number of inspectors which compose an election board from three to two.

Section 3. Amends s. 102.021, F.S., to remove the requirement that poll workers be trained at formal training classes by allowing the Supervisor the discretion to decide the best means of providing training.

Section 4. Amends s. 102.031, F.S., to require the presence of a deputy sheriff at the polling place in lieu of the precinct.

Section 5. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2000.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

Election laws are exempt from the mandates of Art. VII, s. 18, of the Florida Constitution.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

See response above.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

See response above.

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V. COMMENTS:

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

None.

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON ELECTION REFORM:

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