
DIGEST

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Jefferson

HB No. 59

Abstract: Relative to the conduct of elections during or following a gubernatorially declared state of emergency, provides for certain displaced persons who have registered by mail to vote absentee by mail without first voting in person or appearing in the office of the registrar, if they submit certain documentation showing their displaced status. Provides for the effectiveness of such provision. Provides relative to a parishwide shortage of commissioners due to an emergency. Authorizes commissioners from other parishes to serve in the affected parish. Provides relative to selection and training of such commissioners.

Present law (R.S. 18:115(F)) requires any voter who registered to vote by mail and who has not previously voted in the parish in which he is registered to vote in person in the office of the registrar or in person at the precinct where he is registered to vote. Provides that such requirement does not apply to certain persons who are uniformed and overseas, elderly or handicapped to whom other provisions of present law apply, a student whose institution of higher learning is located outside of his parish of residence, provided that the student submit certain documentation, or to a person who appears in the office of the registrar of voters prior to the absentee in person voting period to establish his identity.

Proposed law extends the exemption from the requirements of present law to a person who has been temporarily displaced from his parish of residence by a gubernatorially declared state of emergency, when he also submits documentation showing his displaced status from a nonprofit organization exempt from federal taxation or a federal or state agency. Provides for the provisions of proposed law to be effective for one year following the date of the issuance of any gubernatorial proclamation declaring a state of emergency. Provides for the governor to extend the effective period of proposed law relative to the emergency via proclamation upon certification by the secretary of state that circumstances in the areas affected by the emergency significantly impair the ability of the displaced persons to vote in person during the early voting period or at the polls on election day.

Present law (R.S. 18:425(A)) provides relative to the number of commissioners to be used at each precinct. Provides for reduction in the number of commissioners in certain circumstances where it would not be detrimental to the conduct of the election. Provides for the secretary of state to allocate additional commissioners for overcrowded precincts.

Proposed law retains present law but also provides for the clerk of court to submit a written request to the secretary of state by the 23rd day prior to an election, if he determines that there is a parishwide shortage of commissioners because a significant number of commissioners has been

temporarily displaced by a gubernatorially declared state of emergency. Provides that such request shall include the number of additional commissioners requested and an explanation of the need for additional commissioners. Provides for the secretary of state to determine the need for additional commissioners and the feasibility of allocating such additional commissioners. Provides for the secretary of state to request the clerks of court to survey the commissioners of their parishes for availability to serve as commissioners in the affected parish. Provides for the secretary of state to select commissioners from the lists of available commissioners, giving priority based on proximity to the affected parish. Requires the secretary of state to ensure that the selected commissioners have received adequate training on the voting machines that are used in the parish with the shortage and any procedures necessary for the conduct of that election.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 18:115(F)(2)(d) and 425(A)(4))