

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 260

BY REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

ELECTIONS: Provides relative to federal election guidance and funding

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 18:425.2, relative to elections; to provide relative to directives and guidance
3 from the federal government regarding elections; to require certain notifications
4 regarding such directives and guidance; to prohibit implementation of directives and
5 guidance under certain circumstances; to prohibit acceptance of federal funds for
6 elections under certain circumstances; to provide for an effective date; and to provide
7 for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 18:425.2 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §425.2. Election officials; requirements and prohibitions

11 A. An election official who receives a federal directive or guidance
12 pertaining to elections that is not published on the secretary of state's website shall
13 notify, by certified mail, the governor, the speaker of the Louisiana House of
14 Representatives, and the president of the Louisiana Senate of such directive or
15 guidance within five business days after receipt.

16 B.(1) No election official shall implement any federal directive or guidance
17 pertaining to elections without either an explicit state or federal legal requirement to
18 do so or prior approval of the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs
19 and the Senate Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs as provided by this
20 Subsection.

1 (2) An election official who is not explicitly required by state or federal law
2 to implement the directive or guidance may request the approval of such
3 implementation from the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs and
4 the Senate Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs. Such a request shall be
5 submitted by certified mail delivered to the chairman of each committee. The
6 official shall implement or refrain from implementing the directive or guidance as
7 follows:

8 (a) If both committees vote to approve implementation, after consulting with
9 the secretary of state or his designee, the official shall implement the directive or
10 guidance.

11 (b) If neither committee votes to prohibit implementation within thirty days
12 after receipt of the request from the official, the official shall implement the directive
13 or guidance.

14 (c) If either committee votes to prohibit the implementation, after consulting
15 with the secretary of state or his designee, within thirty days after receipt of the
16 request from the official, the official shall not implement the directive or guidance.

17 C.(1) No election official shall accept or disperse new federal elections funds
18 without either an explicit state or federal legal requirement to do so or prior approval
19 of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget as provided by this Subsection.
20 This Subsection does not pertain to funds provided under the Help America Vote Act
21 or any other funding subject to state or federal law regarding its acceptance and
22 dispersal.

23 (2) An election official who is not explicitly required by state or federal law
24 to accept and disperse the particular federal election funds may request the approval
25 of such acceptance and dispersal from the Joint Legislative Committee on the
26 Budget. Such a request shall be submitted by certified mail delivered to the
27 chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget. The official shall accept
28 and disperse the funds or refrain from accepting and dispersing the funds as follows:

1 (a) If the committee votes to authorize acceptance and dispersal of such
2 funds, after consulting with the secretary of state or his designee, the official shall
3 accept and disperse the funds.

4 (b) If the committee does not vote to disapprove the acceptance and dispersal
5 of funds within thirty days after receipt of the request from the official, the official
6 shall accept and disperse the funds.

7 (c) If the committee votes to disapprove the acceptance and dispersal of
8 funds, after consulting with the secretary of state or his designee, within thirty days
9 after receipt of the request from the official, the official shall not accept or disperse
10 the funds.

11 (3) If an election official accepts and disperses federal election funds in
12 violation of this Subsection, the attorney general shall pursue any available legal
13 means to enjoin the official from doing so and to recover expended funds.

14 D. For purposes of this Section, "election official" has the same meaning as
15 provided in R.S. 18:1466.

16 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
17 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
18 by the governor, as provided in Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
19 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
20 effective on the day following such approval.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 260 Engrossed 2023 Regular Session Beaulieu

Abstract: Prohibits implementation of federal election directives and guidance and spending of federal money for elections under certain conditions.

Proposed law requires and prohibits certain actions related to elections by the secretary of state and his employees, registrars of voters and their employees, clerks of court and their employees, parish boards of election supervisors and their employees, commissioners-in-charge, and commissioners, all referred to in this digest as election officials.

Proposed law requires an election official who receives a federal directive or guidance pertaining to elections that is not published on the secretary of state's website to notify the governor, the speaker of the La. House of Representatives and the president of the La. Senate of such directive or guidance within five business days.

Proposed law prohibits an election official from implementing any federal directive or guidance pertaining to elections unless the implementation is explicitly required by law or one of the following applies:

- (1) The House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs and the Senate Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs approve the implementation after consulting with the secretary of state or his designee.
- (2) Neither committee prohibits the implementation within 30 days after receipt of a request from the official for authority to implement the directive or guidance.

Proposed law prohibits an election official from accepting or dispersing new federal elections funds unless the acceptance and dispersal is explicitly required by law or one of the following applies:

- (1) The Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget votes to approve the acceptance and dispersal of the funds after consulting with the secretary of state or his designee.
- (2) The Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget does not vote to disapprove the acceptance and dispersal within 30 days after receipt of a request from the official for authority to accept and disperse the funds.

Proposed law provides that if an election official accepts and disperses federal election funds in violation of proposed law, the attorney general shall pursue any available legal means to enjoin the official from doing so and to recover expended funds.

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

(Adds R.S. 18:425.2)