

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 877

BY REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER

VOTERS/VOTING: Provides relative to early voting

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 18:1309(A)(1), (B)(1), (C), and (M) and to enact R.S.  
3 18:1309(N), relative to early voting; to expand the time during which the registrar  
4 must remain open to allow for early voting during the early voting period; to repeal  
5 provisions allowing the registrar to determine the time during which early voting  
6 takes place at certain locations; to require the registrar to advertise the days, hours,  
7 and locations where early voting will be conducted in the parish; and to provide for  
8 related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 18:1309(A)(1), (B)(1), (C), and (M) are hereby amended and  
11 reenacted and R.S. 18:1309(N) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 §1309. Early voting; verification

13 A.(1) The period for conducting early voting shall ~~be from~~ include the  
14 following:

15 (a) The third Saturday prior to any scheduled election.

16 (b) The period fourteen days to seven days prior to any scheduled election.

17 \* \* \*

18 B.(1) For the purpose of facilitating early voting, the registrar may designate,  
19 in addition to the location for early voting provided in Subsection A of this Section,  
20 one branch office wherein early voting may be conducted. Any such branch office

1 shall be located in a public building, and the hours during which early voting may  
 2 be conducted therein shall be ~~fixed by the registrar~~ as provided in Subsection A of  
 3 this Section. However, if a branch office of a registrar is destroyed, inaccessible, or  
 4 unsafe during or following a gubernatorially declared state of emergency, the  
 5 registrar may utilize a temporary building as a branch office to discharge his duties  
 6 until an office that meets the requirements of this Section becomes available. Such  
 7 temporary office shall be located within the parish, or if there is no appropriate  
 8 location within the parish due to the emergency, then in an immediately adjacent  
 9 parish, or if there is no appropriate location in any immediately adjacent parish due  
 10 to the emergency, then in the nearest parish in which there is an appropriate location.

11 \* \* \*

12 C. In parishes which extend in one direction more than fifty miles and which  
 13 are interspersed with navigable waters, the registrar may designate, in addition to the  
 14 locations for early voting provided for in Subsections A and B of this Section, one  
 15 additional branch office wherein early voting may be conducted. Any such branch  
 16 office shall be located in a public building and the hours during which early voting  
 17 may be conducted therein shall be ~~fixed by the registrar~~ as provided in Subsection  
 18 A of this Section.

19 \* \* \*

20 M.~~(1)~~(a) In a parish where early voting is conducted at an additional location  
 21 pursuant to R.S. 18:1309.2, ~~the registrar may fix~~ the hours and days during which  
 22 early voting shall be conducted at the additional location during the early voting  
 23 period if such hours and days of voting are approved by the secretary of state no later  
 24 ~~than twenty-five days prior to the election~~ shall be as provided in Subsection A of  
 25 this Section.

26 (b) ~~The registrar shall ensure that adequate notice is posted at the office of~~  
 27 ~~the registrar informing the public of the hours and days during which early voting~~  
 28 ~~will be conducted at the additional location, and the secretary of state shall post such~~  
 29 ~~notice on the secretary of state's website.~~



Proposed law requires the registrar to take all reasonable steps prior to an election to make as many people in the parish as possible aware of the days, hours, and locations for early voting in the parish, including without limitation by issuing press releases to local news services and other media outlets and, if the registrar has a website, by posting notice on the registrar's website. Provides that at a minimum, the registrar shall publish notice of the days, hours, and locations for early voting in the parish at least once a week for two consecutive weeks in the official journal of the parish and in another newspaper with a larger circulation within the parish than the official journal if there is such a newspaper. Provides that such publication shall be completed no later than thirty days prior to the election.

Present law authorizes the registrar to designate one branch office, in addition to the office of the registrar, in a public building where early voting may also be conducted. Authorizes the registrar to designate an additional branch office for early voting in a parish that extends in one direction more than 50 miles and that is interspersed with navigable waters.

Present law (R.S. 18:1309.2) authorizes the secretary of state to develop and implement a program for the conduct of early voting at additional locations within any parish of the state.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law authorizes the registrar to fix the hours during which early voting is to be conducted at branch offices and additional locations under certain circumstances. Proposed law repeals present law and provides that the hours and days during which early voting is conducted at branch offices and additional locations is as provided in present law for the office of the registrar.

(Amends R.S. 18:1309(A)(1), (B)(1), (C), and (M); Adds R.S. 18:1309(N))