

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to elections; amending s. 99.061,
 3 F.S.; requiring write-in candidates to pay certain
 4 fees; amending ss. 99.092 and 105.031, F.S.;
 5 conforming provisions to changes made by this act;
 6 creating s. 100.012, F.S.; prohibiting a write-in
 7 candidate from being considered an opponent for
 8 certain purposes; amending s. 101.015, F.S.; requiring
 9 the Department of State to adopt rules for security of
 10 voting systems; requiring such rules to prohibit
 11 connection to the Internet; amending s. 101.5604,
 12 F.S.; authorizing counties to count ballots by hand at
 13 the precinct level; providing an effective date.

14
 15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

16
 17 **Section 1. Subsection (4) of section 99.061, Florida**
 18 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

19 99.061 Method of qualifying for nomination or election to
 20 federal, state, county, or district office.—

21 (4) (a) Each person seeking to qualify for election to
 22 office as a write-in candidate shall file his or her
 23 qualification papers with the respective qualifying officer at
 24 any time after noon of the 1st day for qualifying, but not later
 25 than noon of the last day of the qualifying period for the

26 office sought.

27 (b) ~~Any person who is seeking election as a write-in~~
28 ~~candidate shall not be required to pay a filing fee, election~~
29 ~~assessment, or party assessment.~~ A write-in candidate is not
30 entitled to have his or her name printed on any ballot; however,
31 space for the write-in candidate's name to be written in must be
32 provided on the general election ballot. A person may not
33 qualify as a write-in candidate if the person has also otherwise
34 qualified for nomination or election to such office.

35 **Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 99.092, Florida**
36 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

37 99.092 Qualifying fee of candidate; notification of
38 Department of State.—

39 (1) Each person seeking to qualify for nomination or
40 election to any office, except a person seeking to qualify by
41 the petition process pursuant to s. 99.095 ~~and except a person~~
42 ~~seeking to qualify as a write-in candidate,~~ shall pay a
43 qualifying fee, which shall consist of a filing fee and election
44 assessment, to the officer with whom the person qualifies, and
45 any party assessment levied, and shall attach the original or
46 signed duplicate of the receipt for his or her party assessment
47 or pay the same, in accordance with the provisions of s.
48 103.121, at the time of filing his or her other qualifying
49 papers. The amount of the filing fee is 3 percent of the annual
50 salary of the office. The amount of the election assessment is 1

51 percent of the annual salary of the office sought. The election
 52 assessment shall be transferred to the Elections Commission
 53 Trust Fund. The amount of the party assessment is 2 percent of
 54 the annual salary. The annual salary of the office for purposes
 55 of computing the filing fee, election assessment, and party
 56 assessment shall be computed by multiplying 12 times the monthly
 57 salary, excluding any special qualification pay, authorized for
 58 such office as of July 1 immediately preceding the first day of
 59 qualifying. No qualifying fee shall be returned to the candidate
 60 unless the candidate withdraws his or her candidacy before the
 61 last date to qualify. If a candidate dies prior to an election
 62 and has not withdrawn his or her candidacy before the last date
 63 to qualify, the candidate's qualifying fee shall be returned to
 64 his or her designated beneficiary, and, if the filing fee or any
 65 portion thereof has been transferred to the political party of
 66 the candidate, the Secretary of State shall direct the party to
 67 return that portion to the designated beneficiary of the
 68 candidate.

69 **Section 3. Subsection (3) of section 105.031, Florida**
 70 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

71 105.031 Qualification; filing fee; candidate's oath; items
 72 required to be filed.—

73 (3) QUALIFYING FEE.—Each candidate qualifying for election
 74 to a judicial office or the office of school board member,
 75 ~~except write-in judicial or school board candidates,~~ shall,

76 | during the time for qualifying, pay to the officer with whom he
 77 | or she qualifies a qualifying fee, which shall consist of a
 78 | filing fee and an election assessment, or qualify by the
 79 | petition process. The amount of the filing fee is 3 percent of
 80 | the annual salary of the office sought. The amount of the
 81 | election assessment is 1 percent of the annual salary of the
 82 | office sought. The Department of State shall transfer all filing
 83 | fees to the Department of Legal Affairs for deposit in the
 84 | Elections Commission Trust Fund. The supervisor of elections
 85 | shall forward all filing fees to the Elections Commission Trust
 86 | Fund. The election assessment shall be deposited into the
 87 | Elections Commission Trust Fund. The annual salary of the office
 88 | for purposes of computing the qualifying fee shall be computed
 89 | by multiplying 12 times the monthly salary authorized for such
 90 | office as of July 1 immediately preceding the first day of
 91 | qualifying. This subsection does not apply to candidates
 92 | qualifying for retention to judicial office.

93 | **Section 4. Section 100.012, Florida Statutes, is created**
 94 | **to read:**

95 | 100.012 Determination of opposition in a general
 96 | election.—For purposes of implementing s. 5(b), Art. VI of the
 97 | State Constitution, a write-in candidate may not be considered
 98 | to be an opponent.

99 | **Section 5. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of subsection (1) of**
 100 | **section 101.015, Florida Statutes, are amended, and paragraph**

101 **(f) is added to that subsection to read:**

102 101.015 Standards for voting systems.—

103 (1) The Department of State shall adopt rules which
104 establish minimum standards for hardware and software for
105 electronic and electromechanical voting systems. Such rules
106 shall contain standards for:

107 (d) Documentation requirements; ~~and~~

108 (e) Evaluation criteria; ~~and~~—

109 (f) Security, including a requirement that voting systems
110 may not connect to the Internet.

111 **Section 6. Section 101.5604, Florida Statutes, is amended**
112 **to read:**

113 101.5604 Adoption of system; procurement of equipment;
114 commercial tabulations.—The board of county commissioners of any
115 county, at any regular meeting or a special meeting called for
116 the purpose, may, upon consultation with the supervisor of
117 elections, adopt, purchase or otherwise procure, and provide for
118 the use of any electronic or electromechanical voting system
119 approved by the Department of State in all or a portion of the
120 election precincts of that county. Thereafter the electronic or
121 electromechanical voting system may be used for voting at all
122 elections for public and party offices and on all measures and
123 for receiving, registering, and counting the votes thereof in
124 such election precincts as the governing body directs. A county
125 may ~~must~~ use an electronic or electromechanical precinct-count

HB 51

2025

126 | tabulation voting system or may count ballots by hand at the
127 | precinct level.

128 | **Section 7.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.