

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to canvassing of absentee ballots;  
 3           amending s. 101.68, F.S.; revising the period during  
 4           which absentee ballots may be canvassed; amending ss.  
 5           101.65 and 101.6923, F.S.; revising the instructions  
 6           to electors provided with absentee ballots to revise  
 7           the date by which an absentee elector must submit an  
 8           updated signature in his or her voter registration  
 9           file used to verify his or her signature on the  
 10          absentee ballot voter's certificate, to conform;  
 11          providing an effective date.

12  
 13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

14  
 15           Section 1. Section 101.65, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
 16           read:

17           101.65 Instructions to absent electors.—The supervisor  
 18           shall enclose with each absentee ballot separate printed  
 19           instructions in substantially the following form:

20                                   READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY  
 21                                   BEFORE MARKING BALLOT.

22           1. VERY IMPORTANT. In order to ensure that your absentee  
 23           ballot will be counted, it should be completed and returned as  
 24           soon as possible so that it can reach the supervisor of  
 25           elections of the county in which your precinct is located no  
 26           later than 7 p.m. on the day of the election. However, if you

27 are an overseas voter casting a ballot in a presidential  
28 preference primary or general election, your absentee ballot  
29 must be postmarked or dated no later than the date of the  
30 election and received by the supervisor of elections of the  
31 county in which you are registered to vote no later than 10 days  
32 after the date of the election.

33 2. Mark your ballot in secret as instructed on the ballot.  
34 You must mark your own ballot unless you are unable to do so  
35 because of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write.

36 3. Mark only the number of candidates or issue choices for  
37 a race as indicated on the ballot. If you are allowed to "Vote  
38 for One" candidate and you vote for more than one candidate,  
39 your vote in that race will not be counted.

40 4. Place your marked ballot in the enclosed secrecy  
41 envelope.

42 5. Insert the secrecy envelope into the enclosed mailing  
43 envelope which is addressed to the supervisor.

44 6. Seal the mailing envelope and completely fill out the  
45 Voter's Certificate on the back of the mailing envelope.

46 7. VERY IMPORTANT. In order for your absentee ballot to be  
47 counted, you must sign your name on the line above (Voter's  
48 Signature). An absentee ballot will be considered illegal and  
49 not be counted if the signature on the voter's certificate does  
50 not match the signature on record. The signature on file at the  
51 start of the canvass of the absentee ballots is the signature  
52 that will be used to verify your signature on the voter's

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53 certificate. If you need to update your signature for this  
54 election, send your signature update on a voter registration  
55 application to your supervisor of elections so that it is  
56 received no later than the start of the canvassing of absentee  
57 ballots, which occurs no earlier than the 28th ~~15th~~ day before  
58 election day.

59 8. VERY IMPORTANT. If you are an overseas voter, you must  
60 include the date you signed the Voter's Certificate on the line  
61 above (Date) or your ballot may not be counted.

62 9. Mail, deliver, or have delivered the completed mailing  
63 envelope. Be sure there is sufficient postage if mailed.

64 10. FELONY NOTICE. It is a felony under Florida law to  
65 accept any gift, payment, or gratuity in exchange for your vote  
66 for a candidate. It is also a felony under Florida law to vote  
67 in an election using a false identity or false address, or under  
68 any other circumstances making your ballot false or fraudulent.

69 Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section  
70 101.68, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

71 101.68 Canvassing of absentee ballot.—

72 (2) (a) The county canvassing board may begin the  
73 canvassing of absentee ballots at 7 a.m. on the 28th ~~15th~~ day  
74 before the election, but not later than noon on the day  
75 following the election. In addition, for any county using  
76 electronic tabulating equipment, the processing of absentee  
77 ballots through such tabulating equipment may begin at 7 a.m. on  
78 the 28th ~~15th~~ day before the election. However, notwithstanding

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79 any such authorization to begin canvassing or otherwise  
80 processing absentee ballots early, no result shall be released  
81 until after the closing of the polls in that county on election  
82 day. Any supervisor of elections, deputy supervisor of  
83 elections, canvassing board member, election board member, or  
84 election employee who releases the results of a canvassing or  
85 processing of absentee ballots prior to the closing of the polls  
86 in that county on election day commits a felony of the third  
87 degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s.  
88 775.084.

89 Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 101.6923, Florida  
90 Statutes, is amended to read:

91 101.6923 Special absentee ballot instructions for certain  
92 first-time voters.—

93 (2) A voter covered by this section shall be provided with  
94 printed instructions with his or her absentee ballot in  
95 substantially the following form:

96 READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE MARKING YOUR BALLOT.  
97 FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY CAUSE YOUR BALLOT NOT  
98 TO COUNT.

99 1. In order to ensure that your absentee ballot will be  
100 counted, it should be completed and returned as soon as possible  
101 so that it can reach the supervisor of elections of the county  
102 in which your precinct is located no later than 7 p.m. on the  
103 date of the election. However, if you are an overseas voter  
104 casting a ballot in a presidential preference primary or general

105 election, your absentee ballot must be postmarked or dated no  
106 later than the date of the election and received by the  
107 supervisor of elections of the county in which you are  
108 registered to vote no later than 10 days after the date of the  
109 election.

110 2. Mark your ballot in secret as instructed on the ballot.  
111 You must mark your own ballot unless you are unable to do so  
112 because of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write.

113 3. Mark only the number of candidates or issue choices for  
114 a race as indicated on the ballot. If you are allowed to "Vote  
115 for One" candidate and you vote for more than one, your vote in  
116 that race will not be counted.

117 4. Place your marked ballot in the enclosed secrecy  
118 envelope and seal the envelope.

119 5. Insert the secrecy envelope into the enclosed envelope  
120 bearing the Voter's Certificate. Seal the envelope and  
121 completely fill out the Voter's Certificate on the back of the  
122 envelope.

123 a. You must sign your name on the line above (Voter's  
124 Signature).

125 b. If you are an overseas voter, you must include the date  
126 you signed the Voter's Certificate on the line above (Date) or  
127 your ballot may not be counted.

128 c. An absentee ballot will be considered illegal and will  
129 not be counted if the signature on the Voter's Certificate does  
130 not match the signature on record. The signature on file at the

131 start of the canvass of the absentee ballots is the signature  
132 that will be used to verify your signature on the Voter's  
133 Certificate. If you need to update your signature for this  
134 election, send your signature update on a voter registration  
135 application to your supervisor of elections so that it is  
136 received no later than the start of canvassing of absentee  
137 ballots, which occurs no earlier than the 28th ~~15th~~ day before  
138 election day.

139 6. Unless you meet one of the exemptions in Item 7., you  
140 must make a copy of one of the following forms of  
141 identification:

142 a. Identification which must include your name and  
143 photograph: United States passport; debit or credit card;  
144 military identification; student identification; retirement  
145 center identification; neighborhood association identification;  
146 or public assistance identification; or

147 b. Identification which shows your name and current  
148 residence address: current utility bill, bank statement,  
149 government check, paycheck, or government document (excluding  
150 voter identification card).

151 7. The identification requirements of Item 6. do not apply  
152 if you meet one of the following requirements:

153 a. You are 65 years of age or older.

154 b. You have a temporary or permanent physical disability.

155 c. You are a member of a uniformed service on active duty  
156 who, by reason of such active duty, will be absent from the

157 county on election day.

158 d. You are a member of the Merchant Marine who, by reason  
159 of service in the Merchant Marine, will be absent from the  
160 county on election day.

161 e. You are the spouse or dependent of a member referred to  
162 in paragraph c. or paragraph d. who, by reason of the active  
163 duty or service of the member, will be absent from the county on  
164 election day.

165 f. You are currently residing outside the United States.

166 8. Place the envelope bearing the Voter's Certificate into  
167 the mailing envelope addressed to the supervisor. Insert a copy  
168 of your identification in the mailing envelope. DO NOT PUT YOUR  
169 IDENTIFICATION INSIDE THE SECRECY ENVELOPE WITH THE BALLOT OR  
170 INSIDE THE ENVELOPE WHICH BEARS THE VOTER'S CERTIFICATE OR YOUR  
171 BALLOT WILL NOT COUNT.

172 9. Mail, deliver, or have delivered the completed mailing  
173 envelope. Be sure there is sufficient postage if mailed.

174 10. FELONY NOTICE. It is a felony under Florida law to  
175 accept any gift, payment, or gratuity in exchange for your vote  
176 for a candidate. It is also a felony under Florida law to vote  
177 in an election using a false identity or false address, or under  
178 any other circumstances making your ballot false or fraudulent.

179 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.