

HOUSE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 311

A bill to amend 1954 PA 116, entitled
"Michigan election law,"
by amending section 759a (MCL 168.759a), as amended by 2012 PA 523.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 Sec. 759a. (1) An absent uniformed services voter or an
2 overseas voter who is not registered, but possessed the
3 qualifications of an elector under section 492, may apply for
4 registration by using the federal postcard application. The
5 department of state, bureau of elections, is responsible for
6 disseminating information on the procedures for registering and
7 voting to an absent uniformed services voter and an overseas voter.
8 (2) Upon the request of an absent uniformed services voter or
9 an overseas voter, the clerk of a county, city, **or** township ~~, or~~



1 ~~village~~ shall electronically transmit a blank voter registration
 2 application or blank absent voter ballot application to the voter.
 3 The clerk of a county, city, **or** township, ~~or village~~ shall accept
 4 a completed voter registration application or completed absent
 5 voter ballot application electronically transmitted by an absent
 6 uniformed services voter or overseas voter. A voter registration
 7 application or absent voter ballot application submitted by an
 8 absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter ~~shall~~**must**
 9 contain the signature of the voter.

10 (3) A spouse or dependent of an overseas voter who is a
 11 citizen of the United States, is accompanying that overseas voter,
 12 and is not a qualified and registered elector anywhere else in the
 13 United States, may apply for an absent voter ballot even though the
 14 spouse or dependent is not a qualified elector of a city or
 15 township of this state.

16 (4) An absent uniformed services voter or an overseas voter,
 17 whether or not registered to vote, may apply for an absent voter
 18 ballot. Upon receipt of an application for an absent voter ballot
 19 under this section that complies with this act, a county, city,
 20 ~~village~~, or township clerk shall forward to the applicant the
 21 absent voter ballots requested, the forms necessary for
 22 registration, and instructions for completing the forms. If the
 23 ballots are not yet available at the time of receipt of the
 24 application, the clerk shall immediately forward to the applicant
 25 the registration forms and instructions, and forward the ballots as
 26 soon as they are available. If a federal postcard application or an
 27 application from the official United States ~~department~~**Department**
 28 of ~~defense~~**Defense** website is filed, the clerk shall accept the
 29 federal postcard application or the application from the official



1 United States ~~department~~**Department** of ~~defense~~**Defense** website as
 2 the registration application and shall not send any additional
 3 registration forms to the applicant. If the ballots and
 4 registration forms are received before the close of the polls on
 5 election day and if the registration complies with the requirements
 6 of this act, the absent voter ballots ~~shall~~**must** be delivered to
 7 the proper election board to be tabulated. If the registration does
 8 not comply with the requirements of this act, the clerk shall
 9 retain the absent voter ballots until the expiration of the time
 10 that the voted ballots must be kept and shall then destroy the
 11 ballots without opening the envelope. The clerk may retain
 12 registration forms completed under this section in a separate file.
 13 The address in this state shown on a registration form is the
 14 residence of the registrant.

15 (5) Not later than 45 days before an election, a county, city,
 16 **or** township, ~~or village~~ clerk shall electronically transmit or
 17 mail as appropriate an absent voter ballot to each absent uniformed
 18 services voter or overseas voter who applied for an absent voter
 19 ballot 45 days or more before the election.

20 (6) Upon the request of an absent uniformed services voter or
 21 overseas voter, the clerk of a county, city, **or** township, ~~or~~
 22 ~~village~~ shall electronically transmit an absent voter ballot to the
 23 voter. ~~The~~**Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the**
 24 voter shall print the absent voter ballot and return the voted
 25 ballot by mail to the appropriate clerk. **Subject to subsection**
 26 **(17), beginning January 1, 2024, a member of a uniformed service on**
 27 **active duty, by reason of being on active duty, or a member of the**
 28 **merchant marine, by reason of service in the merchant marine, who**
 29 **is absent from the United States and does not expect to return to**



1 the residence where the member is otherwise qualified to vote
 2 before an election may electronically return a voted ballot to the
 3 appropriate city or township clerk to be counted under the rules
 4 promulgated by the secretary of state as set forth in subsection
 5 (17).

6 (7) The secretary of state shall prescribe electronic absent
 7 voter ballot formats and electronic absent voter ballot
 8 transmission methods. Each county, city, **or** township ~~, or village~~
 9 clerk shall employ the prescribed electronic ballot formats to
 10 fulfill an absent voter ballot request received from an absent
 11 uniformed services voter or overseas voter who wishes to receive
 12 ~~his or her~~**an** absent voter ballot through an electronic
 13 transmission. The secretary of state shall establish procedures to
 14 implement the requirements in this section and for the processing
 15 of a marked absent voter ballot returned by an absent uniformed
 16 services voter or overseas voter who obtained ~~his or her~~**an** absent
 17 voter ballot through an electronic transmission.

18 (8) The secretary of state shall modify the printed statement
 19 provided under section 761(4) and the absent voter ballot
 20 instructions provided under section 764a as appropriate to
 21 accommodate the procedures developed for electronically
 22 transmitting an absent voter ballot to an absent uniformed services
 23 voter or overseas voter. A statement ~~shall~~**must** be included in the
 24 certificate signed by the absent voter who obtained ~~his or her~~**an**
 25 absent voter ballot through an electronic transmission that the
 26 secrecy of the absent voter ballot may be compromised during the
 27 duplication process. The absent voter ballot instructions provided
 28 to an absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter ~~shall~~**must**
 29 include the proper procedures for returning the absent voter ballot



1 to the appropriate clerk.

2 (9) The size of a precinct ~~shall~~**must** not be determined by
3 registration forms completed under this section.

4 (10) An absent uniformed services voter or an overseas voter
5 who submits an absent voter ballot application is eligible to vote
6 as an absent voter in any local, state, or federal election
7 occurring in the calendar year in which the election is held for
8 that ballot requested if the absent voter ballot application is
9 received by the county, city, ~~village,~~ or township clerk not later
10 than 2 p.m. of the Saturday before the election. ~~A county, city, or~~
11 ~~township clerk receiving an absent voter ballot application from an~~
12 ~~absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter shall transmit to~~
13 ~~a village clerk and the school district election coordinators,~~
14 ~~where applicable, the necessary information to enable the village~~
15 ~~clerk and school district election coordinators to forward an~~
16 ~~absent voter ballot for each applicable election in that calendar~~
17 ~~year to the absent voter.~~ A village clerk receiving an absent voter
18 ballot application from an absent uniformed services voter or
19 overseas voter shall transmit to the township clerk and the school
20 district election coordinators, where applicable, the necessary
21 information to enable the city or township clerk and school
22 district election coordinators to forward an absent voter ballot
23 for each applicable election in that calendar year to the absent
24 voter. If the local elections official rejects a voter registration
25 application or absent voter ballot application submitted by an
26 absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter, the election
27 official shall notify the voter of the rejection.

28 (11) An ~~electronic mail~~**email** address provided by an absent
29 uniformed services voter or overseas voter for the purposes of this



1 section is confidential and exempt from disclosure under the
2 freedom of information act, 1976 PA 442, MCL 15.231 to 15.246.

3 (12) Under the uniformed and overseas citizens absentee voting
4 act, the state director of elections shall approve a ballot form
5 and registration procedures for absent uniformed services voters
6 and overseas voters.

7 (13) An absent uniformed services voter or an overseas voter
8 may use the federal write-in absentee ballot, in accordance with
9 the provisions of the uniformed and overseas citizens absentee
10 voting act, at a regular election or special election to vote for a
11 local, state, or federal office or on a ballot question. ~~An~~**Except**
12 **as otherwise provided in this subsection, an** absent uniformed
13 services voter or an overseas voter who uses the federal write-in
14 absentee ballot shall return ~~his or her~~**the voter's** voted federal
15 write-in absentee ballot by mail to the appropriate clerk. **Subject**
16 **to subsection (17), beginning January 1, 2024, a member of a**
17 **uniformed service on active duty, by reason of being on active**
18 **duty, or a member of the merchant marine, by reason of service in**
19 **the merchant marine, who is absent from the United States and does**
20 **not expect to return to the residence where the member is otherwise**
21 **qualified to vote before an election may electronically return a**
22 **voted ballot to the appropriate city or township clerk to be**
23 **counted under the rules promulgated by the secretary of state as**
24 **set forth in subsection (17).** The state bureau of elections shall
25 do both of the following:

26 (a) Make the ballot format for each election available to
27 absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters by ~~electronic~~
28 ~~mail~~**email** or on an internet website maintained by the department
29 of state.



1 (b) Make the ballot information, including the offices, names
2 of candidates, and ballot proposals, for each election available to
3 absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters on an internet
4 website maintained by the department of state.

5 (14) The clerk of a city ~~, village,~~ or township shall submit
6 to the county clerk of the county in which that city ~~, village,~~ or
7 township is located a written statement no later than 45 days
8 before each election indicating whether absent voter ballots were
9 issued to absent uniformed services voters or overseas voters in
10 compliance with this section and the uniformed and overseas
11 citizens absentee voting act. The city ~~, village,~~ or township clerk
12 shall provide to the county clerk a written explanation describing
13 remedial actions taken by the city ~~, village,~~ or township clerk if
14 the city ~~, village,~~ or township clerk fails to comply with this
15 section and the uniformed and overseas citizens absentee voting
16 act. Not later than 42 days before each election, each county clerk
17 shall submit to the state bureau of elections a written report
18 compiled from the written statements submitted by the city ~~, village,~~
19 ~~and township clerks.~~ The written report ~~shall~~ **must**
20 identify the cities ~~, villages,~~ and townships that complied with
21 the 45-day deadline under this subsection, the cities ~~, villages,~~
22 and townships that did not comply with the 45-day deadline under
23 this subsection, but provided a written explanation, and those
24 cities ~~, villages,~~ and townships that did not comply with the 45-
25 day deadline under this subsection and that did not provide a
26 written explanation. The state bureau of elections may require the
27 clerk of a city ~~, village,~~ or township that did not comply with the
28 45-day deadline under this subsection, but provided a written
29 explanation, to provide additional information. The state bureau of



1 elections shall require the clerk of a city ~~, village,~~ or township
2 that did not comply with the 45-day deadline and that did not
3 provide a written explanation to file a written explanation,
4 describing the remedial actions taken by the city ~~, village,~~ or
5 township clerk, within 1 business day after the state bureau of
6 elections notifies the clerk of that city ~~, village,~~ or township.

7 (15) For a presidential primary election, the secretary of
8 state shall prescribe procedures for contacting an elector who is
9 an absent uniformed services voter or an overseas voter, as
10 described in this section, and who is eligible to receive an absent
11 voter ballot or who applies for an absent voter ballot for the
12 presidential primary election, offering the elector the opportunity
13 to select a political party ballot for the presidential primary
14 election.

15 (16) The secretary of state shall order a city ~~, village,~~ or
16 township clerk to extend the ballot receipt deadline for any
17 absentee voter ballots under this section that were not transmitted
18 to an absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter in
19 compliance with subsection (5). The extension ~~shall~~**must** equal the
20 total number of days beyond the deadline as provided in subsection
21 (5) that the city ~~, village,~~ or township clerk transmitted the
22 requested absentee voter ballots. These absentee voter ballots
23 received during the extension time ~~shall~~**must** be counted and
24 tabulated for the final results of the election provided that the
25 absentee voter ballots are executed and sent by the close of the
26 polls on election day. The election may be formally certified
27 before the end of the extension time if the number of outstanding
28 absentee voter ballots under this subsection will not alter the
29 outcome of the election.



1 (17) The secretary of state shall promulgate rules that
2 establish policies and procedures for the electronic return of
3 voted ballots by eligible members. In promulgating rules that
4 establish the policies and procedures for the electronic return of
5 voted ballots by eligible members, the secretary of state shall
6 require an eligible member to use a United States Department of
7 Defense verified electronic signature, as that term is defined in
8 section 18a, so that the identity of the eligible member can be
9 verified utilizing those policies and procedures. A member who is
10 unable or unwilling to provide a United States Department of
11 Defense verified electronic signature is not eligible to
12 electronically return a voted ballot. The secretary of state shall
13 take reasonable steps to ensure the integrity and secrecy of voted
14 ballots returned electronically. The secretary of state may develop
15 and maintain a secure web portal on the secretary of state's
16 website to facilitate the electronic return of voted ballots by
17 eligible members. Only the secretary of state or the secretary of
18 state's duly authorized agent, a city or township clerk, the
19 clerk's deputy clerk, or a sworn member of the clerk's staff is
20 authorized to access the secure web portal on the secretary of
21 state's website. No later than January 1, 2024, the secretary of
22 state shall promulgate rules pursuant to the administrative
23 procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328, to
24 implement this subsection, and the secretary of state must allow
25 for the electronic return of voted ballots by eligible members
26 starting no later than the 2024 statewide presidential primary
27 election. As used in this subsection, "eligible member" means a
28 member of a uniformed service on active duty or a member of the
29 merchant marine, as described in subsection (6) or (13).



1 (18) ~~(17)~~—As used in this section:

2 (a) "Absent uniformed services voter" means any of the
3 following:

4 (i) A member of a uniformed service on active duty who, by
5 reason of being on active duty, is absent from the place of
6 residence where the member is otherwise qualified to vote.

7 (ii) A member of the merchant marine who, by reason of service
8 in the merchant marine, is absent from the place of residence where
9 the member is otherwise qualified to vote.

10 (iii) A spouse or dependent of a member referred to in
11 subparagraph (i) or (ii) who, by reason of the active duty or service
12 of the member, is absent from the place of residence where the
13 spouse or dependent is otherwise qualified to vote.

14 (b) "Member of the merchant marine" means an individual, other
15 than a member of a uniformed service or an individual employed,
16 enrolled, or maintained on the Great Lakes or the inland waterways,
17 who is either of the following:

18 (i) Employed as an officer or crew member of a vessel
19 documented under the laws of the United States, a vessel owned by
20 the United States, or a vessel of foreign-flag registry under
21 charter to or control of the United States.

22 (ii) Enrolled with the United States for employment or training
23 for employment, or maintained by the United States for emergency
24 relief service, as an officer or crew member of a vessel documented
25 under the laws of the United States, a vessel owned by the United
26 States, or a vessel of foreign-flag registry under charter to or
27 control of the United States.

28 (c) "Overseas voter" means any of the following:

29 (i) An absent uniformed services voter who, by reason of active



1 duty or service, is absent from the United States on the date of an
2 election.

3 (ii) ~~A person~~ **An individual** who resides outside of the United
4 States and is qualified to vote in the last place in which the
5 ~~person~~ **individual** was domiciled before leaving the United States.

6 (iii) ~~A person~~ **An individual** who resides outside of the United
7 States and who, but for such residence outside of the United
8 States, would be qualified to vote in the last place in which ~~he or~~
9 ~~she~~ **the individual** was domiciled before leaving the United States.

10 (d) "Uniformed services" means the ~~army, navy, air force,~~
11 ~~marine corps, coast guard,~~ **Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps,**
12 **Space Force, or Coast Guard,** the ~~commissioned corps~~ **Commissioned**
13 **Corps** of the ~~public health service,~~ **Public Health Service,** the
14 ~~commissioned corps~~ **Commissioned Corps** of the national oceanic
15 **National Oceanic** and ~~atmospheric administration,~~ **Atmospheric**
16 **Administration,** a reserve component of a uniformed service, or the
17 Michigan ~~national guard~~ **National Guard** as **that term is** defined in
18 section 105 of the Michigan military act, 1967 PA 150, MCL 32.505.

19 Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect
20 unless Senate Bill No. 8 of the 101st Legislature is enacted into
21 law.

