



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS



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House Bill 4983 (Substitute S-1 as reported)
House Bills 4984-4986 (Substitute H-1 as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Penelope Tsernoglou (H.B. 4983)
Representative Phil Skaggs (H.B. 4984)
Representative Emily Dievendorf (H.B. 4985)
Representative Jimmie Wilson (H.B. 4986)

House Committee: Elections
Senate Committee: Elections and Ethics

CONTENT

House Bill 4983 (S-1) would amend the Michigan Election Law to clarify the automatic voter registration process as follows:

- Allow the Secretary of State to register to vote an unregistered, eligible individual who was issued a graduated licensing status, in addition to current requirements.
- For each eligible individual who was not already registered, require the SOS to add certain information to that individual's Qualified Voter File (QVF) and electronically forward the individual's information to the clerk of the city or township in which the individual resided to have the clerk register that individual to vote.
- Require the SOS to note in the QVF that an individual was registered under the above circumstances.
- Require the SOS to send a notice and a preaddressed return form by which the individual could decline voter registration.
- For each individual who was of age to vote but who had not provided documentation indicating U.S. citizenship, allow the SOS to offer to register the individual if the individual indicated on the individual's application that the individual was a U.S. citizen.
- Prohibit the SOS from automatically registering an individual who declined to use the individual's license or official State personal identification card as an application for voter registration or who provided documentation demonstrating that the individual was not a U.S. citizen.
- Allow the SOS to register to vote an individual who applied for a license or official State personal identification card, who submitted a change of address form, or who was issued a graduated licensing status, and who qualified to preregister to vote as a 16- or 17-year-old under House Bill 4569.
- Specify that, if an individual who was not eligible to vote became registered to vote under these provisions and voted or attempted to vote, the individual would have a defense for a violation of the Law.
- Prohibit an individual from knowingly or willfully taking voluntary action to register to vote or vote knowing that the individual was not entitled to vote.
- Require the SOS to contact an individual for clarification if the individual had voted in an election after being registered but subsequently returned a notice declining the voter registration.
- Require the SOS to publicly release monthly data reports concerning automatic voter registration and preregistration under the bill.
- Allow the SOS to designate a State agency as an automatic voter registration agency if it verified that the agency, in the regular course of business, collected sufficient information to confirm the eligibility for voter registration or the updating of information for an existing voter registration.

- Require the DHHS to transmit to the SOS certain information related to individuals eligible for voter registration who applied for Medicaid coverage.
- Allow an Indian nation or tribe located in the State to submit a request to the SOS for approval to allow the governing body of the Indian nation or tribe, or an election board, election official, or other designated representative of the Indian nation or tribe, to electronically submit certain information to the SOS for the purpose of registering and preregistering tribal members.
- Require the SOS and MDOC to coordinate to ensure that eligible individuals were automatically registered to vote on release from incarceration.

House Bill 4984 (H-1) would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to specify that sections on an application for an operator's or chauffeur's license pertaining to United States citizenship and whether the applicant declined automatic voter registration could only be used for automatic voter registration transactions.

House Bill 4985 (H-1) would amend Public Act 222 of 1972, which provides for official State personal identification cards, to specify that sections on an application for an official State personal identification card pertaining to United States citizenship and whether the applicant declined automatic voter registration could only be used for automatic voter registration transactions.

House Bill 4986 (H-1) would amend the Enhanced Driver License and Enhanced Official State Personal Identification Card Act to delete a provision that an application for an enhanced driver license or enhanced official State personal identification card must allow the applicant to indicate that the applicant declines to use the application as a voter registration application.

Each bill would take effect June 30, 2025. House Bills 4984 through 4986 are tie-barred to House Bill 4983. House Bill 4983 is tie-barred to House Bill 4569, which would amend the Michigan Election Law to allow eligible individuals who were at least 16 years of age to preregister to vote.

MCL 168.493a et al. (H.B. 4983); 257.307 (H.B. 4984)
28.291 (H.B. 4985); 28.305 (H.B. 4986)

BRIEF RATIONALE

Currently, Michigan practices partial automatic voter registration. The system requires individuals to opt into voter registration at the point of transaction, which often takes place in the SOS's office. According to testimony before the Senate Committee on Elections and Ethics, though the system works, it still leaves many voters unregistered to vote, such as those who do not interact with the SOS. Accordingly, it has been suggested that automatic voter registration be expanded.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

FISCAL IMPACT

The bills would allow the Department of State to verify that a State department or agency collects sufficient information to confirm the eligibility for voter registration and thus be designated by the SOS as an automatic voter registration agency. This could increase costs for the Departments listed above as they would have to establish a procedure and schedule for automatically and electronically transmitting voter registration information from the State agency to the SOS for those individuals who are eligible to register to vote or preregister to

vote. Those costs are indeterminate and depend on the existing capabilities for those departments to comply with this provision.

The Department of State also likely would incur additional ongoing administrative costs to implement the requirements of the bills. Those costs would include confirming information in the QVF to ensure an individual's voter registration preference, compiling the required monthly reports, and other duties related to data management. Those costs are indeterminate and could require the hiring of additional staff to comply with the requirements. The average annual costs for salary and benefits for one classified civil service employee for FY 2023-24 is \$140,000.

Finally, the bills would result in additional costs for the Department of State associated with the mailings required under the proposed bills. The bills would amend the Michigan Election Law to require the Michigan Secretary of State to mail qualifying individuals who apply for an operator's or chauffeur's license information explaining the eligibility requirements to vote and the choice to decline the voter registration. The estimated cost per mailing based on available data is an estimated 66 cents per parcel. The costs are indeterminate and depend on how many parcels actually were mailed.

Date Completed: 11-2-23

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