

REQUIRE COUNTY CLERKS TO REMOVE DECEASED VOTERS FROM QVF

Phone: (517) 373-8080
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Senate Bill 277 (S-2) as passed by the House
Sponsor: Sen. Michael MacDonald
House Committee: Elections and Ethics [discharged]
Senate Committee: Elections
Complete to 9-30-21

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

Senate Bill 277 would amend the Michigan Election Law to require county clerks to update the qualified voter file (QVF) to cancel the registration of deceased electors in their counties at least monthly.

The QVF was mandated by 1994 PA 441 and implemented January 1, 1998. It lists all individuals who are registered to vote in Michigan, including their names, current addresses, address histories, and other identifying information. The QVF is especially important in Michigan's highly decentralized election system, where voter records are managed by over 1,700 local officials.

Under current law, county clerks forward a list of voters who have died to city and township clerks on at least a monthly basis, and those local clerks are responsible for canceling the voter registration of all deceased voters.

The bill would generally shift this responsibility to county clerks instead.

Each time the county clerk updated the QVF to cancel the registration of deceased voters, the secretary of state (SOS) would have to send an electronic notification to the applicable city or township clerk. City and township clerks would then complete the cancellation. At a minimum, the bill would require county clerks to update the QVF themselves to account for these deaths by at least the second business day of each month (with more frequent updates as election day approaches; see below).

Additionally, if the SOS updated the QVF to cancel the registration of a deceased voter, the SOS would have to send an electronic notification to the applicable city or township clerk. The SOS would have to notify city and township clerks of any voter registrations that need to be canceled after 4 p.m. on the day before an election so that the clerk can cancel the registration.

Between 45 and 16 days before an election, each county clerk would have to update the QVF to remove deceased voters weekly, by the close of business on Friday. Between 15 days and 1 day before an election, each county clerk would have to update the QVF daily by close of business. The county clerk would have to notify city and township clerks of

any voter registrations that need to be canceled after 4 p.m. on the day before an election so that the applicable clerk can cancel the registration.

Finally, at least monthly the SOS would have to post on the Department of State website the total number of voter registrations canceled, broken down by the month and year, the county, and the city and township.

MCL 168.509o and 168.510

FISCAL IMPACT:

Senate Bill 277 would have no fiscal impact on the state or local units of government.

Legislative Analyst: Jenny McInerney
Fiscal Analyst: Michael Clossen

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.