

HB 948 -- Voting Rights

Sponsor: Cooper (158)

This bill changes the laws regarding elections. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Prohibits any compensation based on the number of voters registered or registration applications collected and submitted by a person. Persons who collect registration applications are prohibited from destroying, defacing, or concealing them, and any registration application collected by a person must be submitted to the election authority within seven days. Any violation of these provisions is a class four election offense (Section 115.203, RSMo);

(2) Requires persons who are compensated for soliciting more than 10 voter registration applications to register with the Secretary of State as voter registration solicitors and provide certain personal information. Failure to register or providing false information is a class three election offense (Section 115.205);

(3) Establishes procedures for filing complaints with the Secretary of State alleging violations of the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002 and for the Secretary of State to investigate the complaints. If a violation is identified, the Secretary of State will determine and provide the appropriate remedy (Section 115.219);

(4) Requires voters whose names have been removed from the registration records to file judicial appeals within certain time limits (Section 115.223);

(5) Establishes procedures to determine a voter's eligibility to vote at a given polling place and, if eligibility cannot be determined in a timely manner, authorizes the voter to cast a provisional ballot after completing an affidavit. Procedures are detailed for handling, verifying, accepting or rejecting, and counting provisional ballots. State courts do not have jurisdiction to extend polling hours, but certain state officials have authority to extend the hours during a declared statewide emergency (Section 115.430);

(6) Establishes standards for counting ballots in jurisdictions using punch card, optical scan, and paper ballot voting systems and for determining voter intent. Write-in stickers are allowed under certain circumstances (Section 115.456);

(7) Prohibits electioneering or conducting exit polls within 50 feet of a polling place instead of the current 25 feet (Section 115.637); and

(8) Repeals Section 115.126 authorizing election authorities to implement an advanced voting system.