

HCS HJR 9 -- ELECTIONS AND VOTING RIGHTS

SPONSOR: Deeken (Cox)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Elections by a vote of 7 to 5.

Upon voter approval this proposed constitutional amendment changes the laws regarding elections and voting rights. In its main provisions, the substitute:

(1) Requires persons seeking to vote to use a photographic identification including a valid driver's license or nondriver's license and cards or documents with photographs issued by the Missouri National Guard, the United States armed forces, or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Other documents with both a signature and photograph issued by Missouri or the United States may also be used to establish a voter's eligibility to vote. The state must provide at least one form of identification at no cost to anyone who desires one. Individuals born on or before January 1, 1944, who have disabilities or who have religious objections to photographic identification may vote by provisional ballot. The Secretary of State will provide notification of the new voting requirements through a variety of media, and election authorities must post notice of the new requirements. The Department of Revenue will provide an annual report by January 1 documenting the number of individuals who have requested and received a nondriver's license photo identification to each member of the General Assembly;

(2) Establishes deadlines for voter registration prior to an election except in certain cases where absentee ballots are allowed. The substitute specifies that the normal closing time of public buildings on the fourth Wednesday prior to the election will be the deadline except that no registration may occur after 10:00 p.m.;

(3) Allows for an advance voting period from the second Wednesday prior to the election to the Wednesday prior to the election. Each senatorial district must have one advance voting center; and if there is more than one county in a senatorial district, there must be an advance voting center in every county in that district. The Secretary of State and each election authority must provide adequate notice of advance voting centers and times. All costs associated with advance voting centers will be reimbursed by an appropriation from general revenue; and

(4) Allows voting by absentee ballot for reasons specified in the substitute. Persons in federal service who are eligible to register may vote in federal elections by absentee ballot without

registering to vote, and interstate former residents may vote in presidential elections without registering to vote. New residents may vote by absentee ballot after registering to vote. No person who has voted an absentee ballot can vote at the polls on election day. Anyone violating this provision will be guilty of a class one election offense.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Effect on General Revenue Fund of an Income of \$0 in FY 2010, an Income of \$0 or Unknown to a Cost of Unknown greater than \$3,372,184 in FY 2011, and an Income of \$0 or Unknown to a Cost of Unknown greater than \$5,535,969 in FY 2012. Estimated Income on Other State Funds of \$0 in FY 2010, \$0 or Unknown in FY 2011, and \$0 or Unknown in FY 2012.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will guarantee the integrity of the electoral process. Voter identification requirements do not suppress voter turnout and are recommended by the federal bipartisan Baker-Carter Commission.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cox; Robert Hess; and Missouri Eagle Forum.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that amending the constitution for this purpose is unnecessary. Missouri has no documented cases of voter fraud. The measure will disenfranchise numerous voters, and its financial cost is substantial.

Testifying against the bill were Office of the Secretary of State; AARP; Missouri National Education Association; American Civil Liberties Union of Eastern Missouri; League of Women Voters of Missouri; Barbra Kopfer, League of Women Voters of Columbia; Missouri Association for Social Welfare; Deniese Lieberman, Advancement Project; DeAnna Noriega, Services for Independent Living; Paraquad, Incorporated; Whole Person, Incorporated; and Michelle Bishop, Missouri Disability Vote Project.