

HCS HJR 90 -- EARLY VOTING

SPONSOR: Dugger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Elections by a vote of 6 to 3.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment requires, beginning with the 2016 general election, the establishment of an early voting period from the third Saturday until the Tuesday prior to election day, excluding Sundays, for any election for federal or statewide officials. All general election laws must apply to the early voting periods and voting hours must be set by general law. These provisions cannot inhibit the right to vote by absentee ballot or any other method of voting allowed by general law. The General Assembly may regulate the early voting process by general law that is not inconsistent with the requirements of these provisions.

These provisions and any implementing legislation are subject to the appropriation of state funds to local election authorities to cover the costs of early voting. If no appropriation is made, these requirements or any legislation implementing these provisions are void.

In the instance where a simultaneous constitutional amendment authorizing early voting or advance voting is placed on the ballot together with this proposed amendment at the same election, the amendment that receives the highest affirmative vote must take effect and any amendment or amendments receiving a lower vote total must be void and of no effect.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the amendment allows a reasonable early voting period with additional early voting centers while also ensuring that local election authorities do not face an unfunded mandate.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Dugger.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Those testifying for informational purposes say that the amendment clearly obligates the state to pay for early voting. It would be best to avoid an unfunded mandated on local election authorities. Some initiative petition amendments might allow a longer period for early voting which could be convenient.

Others testifying, for informational purposes only, were Missouri Association of County Clerks and Election Authorities and Office of

the Secretary of State.