

HCS HB 1761 -- ELECTIONS

SPONSOR: McGaugh

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elections and Elected Officials by a vote of 7 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1761.

This bill allows qualified voters to vote in person by absentee ballot without providing a reason. Voting by mail using absentee ballots will continue to require a reason specified under Section 115.277, RSMo.

The bill also creates a distance requirement for gathering signatures for any initiative or referendum petition at polling places of 100 feet.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill improves Missouri's voting process by providing a no excuses six week time frame to vote by in-house absentee ballot. The bill adds flexibility and could reduce election costs and the number of election officials needed at the polls. All our neighboring states except Kentucky have something similar to this.

Testifying for the bill were Representative McGaugh; Brianna Lennon, Boone County; Crystal Hall, Lincoln County; Denise Lieberman, Missouri Voter Protection Coalition; Eric Fey, St. Louis County Board Of Elections; Missouri Association of County Clerks and Election Authorities; and Rick Watson, Missouri Association of County Clerks and Election Authorities.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.