

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 551
By: Madden
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In view of the sacrifices being made by military personnel and their families stationed overseas, these individuals should be afforded every opportunity to cast an absentee ballot in federal or other elections in which they are eligible to participate. Currently, this right to vote can be exercised by submission of a federal postcard application, allowing the overseas service personnel and their dependents to register to vote and request an absentee ballot. While the application can be mailed or faxed, it is not uncommon for service personnel and their dependents to have greater access to a scanner.

H.B. 551 gives military personnel and their dependents the option to e-mail a scanned version of a federal postcard application to vote by absentee ballot.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the secretary of state in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 551 amends the Election Code to add the option of submitting a federal postcard application used for voting to the early voting clerk by electronic transmission of an image of the application under procedures prescribed by the secretary of state. The bill requires the secretary of state by rule to establish the date on which such an application is considered to be electronically submitted to the early voting clerk.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.