

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 997
By: Shapiro
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerned parties contend that allowing the public inspection of mail-in ballot applications can facilitate unscrupulous actors in their efforts to commit voter fraud by helping those actors to identify voters who need assistance in marking their ballots. The actors offer such assistance and then mark the ballots in a manner that may be contrary to the wishes of the voter.

S.B. 997 seeks to prevent such voter fraud by making an application for a ballot to be voted by mail unavailable for public inspection until the first business day after election day, except to voters seeking to verify their own information.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 997 amends the Election Code to provide that a copy of an application for a ballot to be voted by mail is not available for public inspection, except to the voter seeking to verify that the information pertaining to the voter is accurate, until the first business day after election day. The bill removes a provision authorizing a copy of an application for a ballot to be voted by mail to be obtained from the early voting clerk 72 hours after the time a ballot is mailed to the voter, or 48 hours after the time a ballot is mailed to the voter if the mailing occurs on the fourth day before election day.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2011.