

Expanded Voting Opportunities for Overseas and Military Voters

SB 103 expands voting opportunities for certain absentee federal services voters and military personnel and their family members. The bill allows overseas voters to vote a full ballot at all elections; apply for, receive, and return their ballots by electronic means; and vote a write-in ballot, if needed. The measures allow the State to comply with two federal laws governing the voting process for military and overseas voters: the Uniformed Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) and the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act.

Expansion of Federal Service Voters' Ballots

The bill expands the ballot forms for absentee voters living overseas, who are called federal services voters, under UOCAVA. The bill clarifies the ballot and eliminates certain exclusions from the ballot (local questions, state constitutional amendments, and political party precinct committee positions), so that ballots for these voters will include all offices and any proposition or question for which the voter otherwise is entitled to vote.

E-balloting for Certain Federal Services Voters and Military Personnel

The bill allows certain federal services voters (*i.e.*, those residing outside the United States or those who are members of the United States armed forces or a spouse or dependent of a member of the armed forces and a qualified elector who cannot vote timely by mail) to apply for registration and an absentee ballot by electronic mail or other electronic method authorized by the Secretary of State. The voter may then return the ballot by electronic means under certain circumstances. The bill extends confidentiality protections currently in place for ballots submitted by facsimile to ballots submitted via electronic mail.

Additionally, the bill changes the time frame for which an application to vote such an absentee ballot would be valid from through the next two regularly scheduled general elections for national or state office, to through the end of the calendar year.

Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot

The bill allows overseas voters to vote a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) under certain circumstances, in conformity with federal law: if the person submitted a ballot application, the ballot was not received, and the FWAB is submitted from outside the United States.