

SESSION OF 2009

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 55

As Amended by House Committee on
Elections

Brief*

SB 55 would expand the ballot forms for absentee voters living overseas who are called federal service voters under the federal Uniformed Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. Current state law excludes overseas absentee ballots from including elections involving local questions, state constitutional amendments, and political party precinct committee positions. The bill would eliminate these exclusions and clarify the ballot must include all officers and any proposition for which the voter otherwise would be entitled to vote.

Background

The bill, as introduced, addressed the absentee ballots received by federal service voters. According to proponent testimony, the Secretary of State's Office speculated that local issues and political precinct races were omitted from overseas ballots due to a lack of information that was readily available to absentee voters in other countries. The advent of the Internet has allowed political information to be disseminated more quickly and broadly. There was no opponent testimony against the original bill. The fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget indicates that the original bill would not have an effect on the state's revenue or expenditures. The fiscal note further states that county election officials would likely save time since they would no longer be required to prepare a separate ballot for federal service voters overseas.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

The Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections amended the contents of SB 57 into the bill. SB 57 would revise the method by which last-minute campaign finance reports are delivered to the Secretary of State during the last eleven days prior to a primary or general election. According to proponent testimony provided by the Secretary of State's Office and the Governmental Ethics Commission, the current law allows for the hand or express mail delivery of reports. This requires both offices to be open during the weekend before an election. According to the agencies, all reports during the last election cycles were received by electronic means. There was no opponent testimony against the bill. The fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget indicates that the bill would not have an effect on the state's revenue, and any reduction in expenditures would be negligible.

The Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections also amended the bill to allow a candidate for a local or state office to transfer funds in a campaign account to the account for another campaign for which the candidate intends to run.

The Senate Committee of the Whole amended the bill to eliminate the campaign funds transfer authorization while leaving technical amendments to some of those campaign finance statutes.

The House Committee on Elections returned SB 55 to its original state (*i.e.*, dealing only with overseas absentee voters).