

POLLING PLACE LOCATIONS

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House Bill 5031 (H-2) as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Ann M. Bollin

1st Committee: Elections and Ethics

2nd Committee: Ways and Means

Complete to 12-11-19

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5031 would amend the Michigan Election Law to expand the types of locations that could be used as polling places. Currently, school buildings, fire stations, police stations, and other publicly owned or controlled buildings must be used as polling places. Other buildings owned by tax-exempt organizations may be designated if public buildings are not available or convenient. Additionally, housing facilities or complexes in which 150 or more people reside may be designated.

The bill would provide that, if a location currently allowed were not reasonably available for use, any privately owned clubhouse or conference center located within an apartment or condominium complex, hotel or motel conference center, or recreation clubhouse such as a golf course clubhouse or park complex clubhouse, could also be designated as a polling place, except for privately owned buildings owned by a person that is a sponsor of a political committee or independent committee.

MCL 168.662

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 5031 would have no fiscal impact on the Department of State but may provide marginal cost savings to local units of government by allowing buildings other than publicly owned buildings to be designated as polling locations.

BRIEF DISCUSSION:

According to committee testimony, due to the disruption and security concerns caused by Election Day—especially in the case of schools—locations that have historically served as polling places are more reluctant to do so. While some schools that serve as polling places have opted to give students Election Day off¹ as one of the six days “forgiven” for conditions outside the control of school authorities, such as storms or health concerns, recent years with a large number of snow days have made that option less appealing. The bill would give local units the flexibility to designate other locations as polling places.

¹ https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2016/04/ann_arbor_schools_to_close_on.html

POSITIONS:

Representatives of the Council of Election Officials testified in support of the bill. (10-16-19)

The following entities indicated support for the bill:

Livingston County (10-16-19)

Michigan League of Conservation Voters (10-30-19)

American Civil Liberties Union (10-30-19)

Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (12-4-19)

Michigan Municipal League (12-10-19)

The Michigan Secretary of State indicated a neutral position on the bill. (10-16-19)

The Michigan Sierra Club indicated opposition to the bill. (10-30-19)

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