

LWVIL Issues Briefing

January 28, 2012

Election Laws

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This report is in two parts. The first covers election laws legislative activity. The second deals with election administration activity.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY In the first half of the 97th legislative session the League watched several election bills. Of more than 100 bills only a few became law. The League took no action on any proposed election laws bills. Bills remaining in either house could be acted on in this session. This report provides only a brief description of the legislation that became law.

PA 97-0585 – amended the Election Code to provide that no later than 2 business days following the last day to file an objection to a candidate for judicial office the State Board of Elections shall remove the home residence address of each Supreme, Appellate, or Circuit Court Judge and each candidate for Supreme, Appellate, or Circuit Judge listed on its website.

PA 97-0275 – amended the Election Code to extend the “incapacitated voter” provisions to residents of state operated and federally operated veterans homes, hospitals or facilities that qualify for absentee ballots, and requires that elections be conducted at these homes, hospitals, and facilities.

PA 97-0642 – Amendment #2 made to this appropriations bill provides funding to the State Board of Elections including monies to reimburse local election authorities for payments to election judges.

PA 97-0081 – was the omnibus elections laws bill this session. It put together several election laws bills already introduced, clarified wording in legislation passed in the

previous session, and corrected errors in other sections of the statutes. Not all changes are included in this report. The covered topics are shown in bold type.

The provision requiring the Secretary of State to appoint **Deputy Registrars** in the drivers' license examination stations was removed from the statutes. This change brings the law into conformity with actual practice as implemented under the 1993 National Voter Registration Act.

Deputy registrars must return registration forms to the appointing authority by first class mail within 2 days; or by personal delivery within 7 days.

Petitions: petitions are not considered filed until they are received by a political sub-division, election authority or the State Board of Elections.

The **number of signatures** required on petitions **for judges** in circuits and sub-circuits in the First District was changed. Not less than 1000 signatures are needed.

Judicial candidates are limited to filing petitions for only one sub-circuit vacancy and only one circuit vacancy in one filing period.

Petition requirements for candidates **for State Senator and State Representative** were changed. At least 1000 and not more than 3000 signatures are needed by **State Senate** candidates. At least 500 and not more than 1500 signatures are required on the petitions for **State Representative** candidates.

Filing dates for candidates, including for local elections, were changed to 113-106 days before an election. This change makes uniform filing dates for all elections.

Uniformity in **ballot certification dates** was established when all were changed to 68 days before an election.

Ballots for military personnel must be available from local election authorities 46 days prior to any election.

Election authorities must require **separate absentee ballot applications** before each election.

Early voting polling places may be closed if the building in which the polling place is located has been closed by the state or unit of local government in response to a severe weather emergency. Additional hours shall be added. Reasonable efforts to notify the public shall be made.

Military e-mail addresses are exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.

The canvass of results on **Constitutional Amendment** questions are to be sent to the State Board of Elections, not the Secretary of State.

The signature requirement on petitions **for public questions** was changed from 11% of total ballots in the prior election to 8% of total ballots cast for governor.

The requirement that **petitions be segregated** by election jurisdictions for petitions filed in accordance with Article XIV, Sec. 3 (Constitutional Initiative for Legislative Article) has been eliminated.

Changes were made in the language relating to **delegate and alternate delegate** selection in presidential primaries.

In an effort to bring **uniformity to the electoral process**, the Illinois Municipal, the School Codes and the Circuit Court Acts were changed to reflect the changes made in the Election Code.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITY

In July five new members were appointed to the State Board of Elections. Three board members were re-appointed. The terms are staggered. Four terms will end in 2013 and four in 2015.

The State Board of Elections and staff from local election authorities have been reducing the number of duplicate voter registrations in the statewide voter registration database.

The state board is looking at the possibility of implementing a statewide election management system.

SBE expects to conduct an electronic canvass in a few election jurisdictions following the March Primary. This will be a pilot study limited to a few jurisdictions with the possibility of a full canvass in November.

The Campaign Finance Reform Task Force Report that was submitted on December 31, 2011 is posted on the SBE's website. The report is 200 pages.