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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sSB 778**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES.***

#### **SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes registrars of voters to reduce the number of polling places for a primary, the location of which may be the same or different than the polling places for the corresponding general election. Current law requires that towns use the same polling place or places for a primary as they use for the election. The bill requires the polling places for a primary to remain the same as for the corresponding election if the registrars cannot agree to the changes, or if any candidate objects.

If the registrars reduce the number of polling places, they may similarly agree to reduce the number of moderators, provided there is at least one certified moderator per polling place. They must also make sure that a sign is posted in a closed primary polling place that would otherwise be open. The sign must provide electors with information redirecting them to the open polling place or places.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

#### **PROCEDURES FOR PRIMARY POLLING PLACE REDUCTION**

The bill establishes procedures and a timeframe for reducing the number of primary polling places. Specifically:

1. at least 60 days before every primary, the registrars must designate the polling place(s), which may be fewer in number than were used at the last election or will be used at the upcoming election;
2. between 45 and 60 days before the primary, the registrars must

- notify the secretary of the state and candidates of any change;
3. the registrars must immediately notify any petitioning candidate of the change if he or she becomes eligible for ballot access after other candidates have received the notification;
  4. by 4:00 p.m. on the 30th day before the primary, a candidate who objects to the change must notify the secretary of the state in writing of his or her objection (the secretary must keep the objection confidential);
  5. the secretary must promptly notify the registrars and all other candidates in the primary of the objection, in which case the polling places remain the same as for the election; and
  6. if there is no objection, the registrars must notify by mail, no later than 25 days before the primary, each elector whose polling place has changed for the upcoming primary.

If a polling place changes and the affected electors receive notification, the registrars of voters do not have to notify the electors for any subsequent primary as long as the polling location remains the same.

Finally, the bill specifies that if the rules of either major party authorize unaffiliated electors to vote in the party primary, the primaries must be held in the same room of the polling place. Current Republican and Democratic state party rules do not allow unaffiliated electors to participate in their primary elections.

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 14 Nay 0 (04/05/2013)