
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5480

AN ACT CONCERNING REGISTRARS OF VOTERS, THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE AND THE STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION, AND THE POSTING OF REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTER IDENTIFICATION.

SUMMARY:

This bill specifies that the secretary of the state's written declaratory rulings, instructions, and opinions must (1) be implemented, executed, or carried out; (2) labeled as rulings, instructions, or opinions; and (3) cite the authority on which they are based. Current law presumes such written statements correctly interpret and effectuate the administration of elections and primaries, but does not require them to be implemented.

By law, these requirements do not apply to campaign finance laws. The bill specifies that campaign finance laws include those governing the citizen's election program, computerization of campaign financing statements and data, and public financing for municipal elections. Such laws fall under the purview of the State Elections and Enforcement Commission (SEEC).

The bill expands the SEEC's authority to levy a civil penalty of up to \$2,000 per offense against town clerks, registrars of voters, and primary or election officials who fail to discharge certain statutory duties. It allows the SEEC to impose such a penalty on these officials for failing to discharge duties imposed under all state election laws, except those relating to campaign finance. Currently, the penalty applies only to duties imposed under certain election laws (generally, those governing voting methods and primary or election dates).

Under current law, the SEEC can also impose a civil penalty of up to \$2,000 per offense or twice the amount of any improper payment or contribution, whichever is greater, against any person it finds has

violated state campaign finance laws.

In addition, the bill:

1. requires voter identification requirements be posted in a manner the secretary of the state prescribes at each polling place where official checkers are located;
2. requires towns to provide their registrars of voters with Internet access and ensure they can correspond with the secretary of the state by email; and
3. makes conforming changes regarding access to, and responsible safe keeping of, official registrar of voter records.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 7 Nay 5 (03/19/2014)