

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS28045 / S1002

Clerks are working to address the challenges presented by the pandemic while also ensuring a safe in-person voting experience for those who want to vote on Election Day at the polls.

This legislation assists clerks with in-person voting. Due to the pandemic, finding adequate polling places with sufficient space for social distancing and recruiting willing poll workers presents a serious challenge. The purpose of this legislation is to create an alternative to polling place voting, in the form of vote centers. Vote centers add greater flexibility for voters and clerks by allowing any voter from any part of the county to go to any voter center and vote the correct ballot.

Vote centers would operate similar to early voting by utilizing the statewide voter registration system or electronic poll books. This ensures voters receive the right ballot and increases Election Day security by recording each voter as having voted in the system, thereby preventing anyone from voting more than once. The additional security and flexibility created by vote centers would assist clerks in being able to adjust to pandemic guidelines. Vote centers in larger venues would provide space to spread out and disperse crowds over an entire day, while providing voters with more options and flexibility. This legislation also includes limitations to help ensure an adequate number of voting locations in both rural and urban parts of the state. The use of vote centers would be optional and counties could continue to use standard polling places.

FISCAL NOTE

There is no additional fiscal impact to the State. Counties may need to make an initial investment in equipment needed to run vote centers. Federal funding is available for these investments due to the pandemic.

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DISCLAIMER: This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).