

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

### RS28046 / S1001

County clerks are concerned about the challenges they face trying to ensure the integrity of the November Election while also being responsive to public health concerns. It is anticipated that the majority of voters will request an absentee ballot for November, and 250,000 registered voters already have.

This legislation is particularly critical this year due to increased demand for absentee voting in response to the current pandemic. The purpose of this legislation is to provide additional time for clerks to process the huge volume of absentee ballots requested.

This legislation is separated into two parts, each of which addresses distinct elements of the absentee process. The first addresses the time needed to prepare ballots to be mailed at the beginning of the election cycle. The deadline for local ballots to be mailed would be moved from 45 days prior to the election to 30 days prior. The existing time frame to prepare the first mailing is very narrow, and this would allow more time to ensure the proper preparation of the ballots going out.

The second section addresses clerks' need for additional time to physically open and scan all of the ballots once received. Due to the expected volume, it will take counties days to complete these tasks. Allowing clerks to complete these tasks in advance will increase the timeliness of results and bolster voter confidence by releasing results when expected. This legislation ensures that no results may be tabulated until after the polls have closed on Election Day.

### FISCAL NOTE

There is no additional fiscal impact to the State or Counties.

**Contact:**

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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).