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Bill Analysis
Legislative Service Commission

Sub. H.B. 350

127th General Assembly

(As Reported by H. State Government and Elections)

**Reps. Wolpert, Batchelder, Huffman, Evans, Peterson, Fende, Flowers,
S. Williams, Webster, Bulp, Combs, Brown**

BILL SUMMARY

- Permits a student at an Ohio institution of higher education to serve as a precinct election official in the county in which the student attends school.
- Permits up to two high school seniors to serve as precinct officers at a polling place, if that polling place has six or more precinct officers.
- Expands the authority for a board of elections to assign voters from one precinct to vote in another precinct at a special election from applying only to school districts to apply to election district that crosses precinct boundaries.
- Permits voters in an election district that crosses county lines to be assigned to a precinct in another county at a special election with the consent and approval of the board of elections of the other county, if the number of voters assigned to vote in that other county is 200 or less.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Residency of precinct election officers

Continuing law requires a board of elections to appoint four precinct officers for each election precinct, not more than one-half of which may be members of the same political party. Additional precinct officers, equally divided between the two major political parties, may be appointed when necessary to expedite voting. Existing law requires the appointed precinct officers to be residents of the county in which the precinct is located.

Under the bill, a person who is currently enrolled as a student at an institution of higher education¹ that is located within Ohio and who is registered to vote in Ohio may serve as a precinct officer in either of the following locations:

(1) A precinct in the county in which the person is registered to vote;

(2) A precinct in the county in which the institution of higher education that the person currently attends is located, if the person can provide proof to the board of elections that the person is currently enrolled at the institution of higher education.

Thus, under the bill, a college student who is registered to vote in Ohio may serve as a precinct officer in a county in which the student does not reside, as long as the student is currently enrolled in an institution of higher education located within that county. (R.C. 3501.22(B).)

Number of minors who may serve as election officers in each precinct

Continuing law permits a board of elections, in conjunction with the board of education of a city, local, or exempted village school district, the governing authority of a community school, or the chief administrator of a nonpublic school to establish a program permitting certain high school students to serve as precinct officers at an election. To be eligible to participate, a student must be a United States citizen, a resident of the county, at least 17 years of age, and enrolled in the senior year of high school. Students who are appointed as precinct officers cannot serve as presiding judges and are excused from school on the day of the election.

Existing law prohibits more than one precinct officer in any given precinct from being under 18 years of age. Under the bill, up to two students who are under 18 years of age and participating in the previously described program may serve as precinct officers in a precinct, if the precinct has six or more precinct officers. If a precinct has fewer than six precinct officers, not more than one of those officers may be under 18 years of age, as under existing law. (R.C. 3501.22(E).)

¹ The bill defines an "institution of higher education" as a state institution of higher education, a private college, university, or other postsecondary institution located in Ohio that possesses a certificate of authorization issued by the Ohio Board of Regents or a certificate of registration issued by the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools (R.C. 3501.22(B)).

Assignment of electors to precincts for special elections

Under existing law, when only a portion of a precinct is included within the boundaries of a school district, the board of elections is permitted to assign the electors living in that portion of a precinct to the nearest precinct within the boundaries of the school district for the purpose of voting at any special school election held in that school district. In an election in which only a part of the electors of a precinct is qualified to vote, the board is permitted to assign voters in that partial precinct to an adjoining precinct. The assignment may be made to an adjoining precinct in another county with the consent and approval of the board of elections of that county. The board is required to notify all electors so assigned of the location of the polling place at which they are entitled to vote at least ten days before the election. (R.C. 3503.01.)

The bill expands these provisions by applying them to voters in any election district, instead of only to voters in school district elections. An "election district" means a school district, municipal corporation, township, or other political subdivision that includes territory in more than one precinct or any other district or authority that includes territory in more than one precinct and that is authorized by law to place an issue on the ballot at a special election. Thus, under the bill, a board of elections may assign voters from one precinct to vote in another precinct at a special election, if the election district conducting the special election crosses precinct boundaries.

The bill also limits the number of voters who may be assigned to a precinct in another county. Under the bill, voters may only be assigned to a precinct in another county if the number of voters who would be voting in a precinct in the other county is 200 or less. (R.C. 3503.01.)

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	10-11-07
Reported, H. State Gov't & Elections	02-12-08

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