



## **SB259 – Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (By Request - Departmental)**

### **Election Law - Local Boards of Elections - Election Plan Requirements**

#### **Purpose:**

1. Combines three election related plans into one submission for the State Board review and approve.
2. Changes the deadline to submit polling place, early voting and drop box plans to allow for SBE review and potential changes without disputation of the electoral process.
3. Alters the benchmark for precinct polling place locations to redistricting rather than a specific year
4. Clarifies the geographic distribution of early voting centers to a specific number of centers.

#### **Comments:**

The State Board of Elections supports the legislation. The proposed bill (1) creates an election plan for a county combining the three existing plans for election administration into one (2) alters the deadline for submission of the election plan to allow greater time for SBE review and potential changes without disputation of the electoral process (3) changes the benchmark of precinct polling place locations and (4) clarifies when geographic distribution of early voting centers should be considered in their designation.

The proposed legislation combines three election related plans, early voting, polling place, and drop box, into one county election plan for the State Board to review and approve. The deadline for the election plan has been moved from 6 months prior to the election to 7 months. The extra month allows for greater review and analysis by the State Board. Additionally, the State Board can receive public comments on the plans. If a plan was rejected and sent back to the local jurisdiction for modification, the timeline for election administration is not disrupted.

The proposed legislation changes the benchmark for precinct polling place locations in the polling place plan from 2018 to the current redistricting year. 2018 is not a correct indicator for locations. Redistricting occurred in 2020 changing precinct boundaries and polling place locations. The intent of the baseline was to ensure that any move or consolidation of polling place locations was justified. Changing the baseline to the first election year after redistricting achieves that legislative intent, rather than choosing an arbitrary date.

Finally, the bill clarifies when the geographic distribution of early voting centers is to be considered by a local board for the placement of early voting centers. Geographic distribution should only occur when a county has 4 or more early voting centers.

Thank you and we look forward to your favorable passage of this bill.

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