

Bill Summary
2nd Session of the 58th Legislature

Bill No.:	SB 1570
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Author:	Sen. Hamilton
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Bill Analysis

SB 1570 provides that only persons with a disability or absent the day of the vote shall be able to use absentee voting. All other persons must vote in person at the polling stations. Such persons must apply for an absentee ballot no less than 10 days prior to the election. The measure provides that a blank application may be sent to a requesting elector as well as made available online. No government employee may send absentee ballot applications directly to any elector except upon the direct request of such elector. The measure also provides that no person other than the elector, caregiver, common carrier, election official, or law enforcement official may handle the application. Applications must be signed by the elector as well as a witness. No electronic signature will be permitted. Witnesses are prohibited from signing more than 1 application unless it is signed by an immediate family member. Additionally, applicants must send the absentee ballot application with a valid photo ID listed in the measure. For those who cannot afford an ID, motor vehicle agents may issue one for free upon the elector's application. Those who cannot physically travel to the agents may be provided state transportation.

The measure directs election officials to maintain a list of absentee ballots sent to electors. County election officials must provide absentee mail ballots or early ballot information to state election authorities within 24 hours of request, transmission, and return of all absentee or mail ballots. Additionally, absentee ballots must attach an affidavit signed by the voter. The affidavit shall contain the signature of a witness or a notary public or other official authorized to acknowledge oaths. The measure prohibits election officials from maintaining a permanent database of absentee ballots. The measure also requires absentee ballots to be received by the time polls close on Election Day. Upon receiving the ballot, officials shall record the receipt and store the ballots in a secure location that shall not be opened until counting begins. The counting of absentee ballots shall begin on the day of the election for which the absentee ballots have been submitted and only after the closing of the polls. Such counting shall continue uninterrupted until all ballots appropriately submitted have been tabulated. The measure repeals current laws governing absentee ballots.

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