



House Elections Committee  
February 28, 2023

Promote the Vote submits the below written testimony in support of, and suggesting changes to, HBs 4127 and 4128

**HBs 4127 and 4128 Should Be Expanded to Ban Guns in All Places Where Voting and Election Administration Occur.**

PTV supports the intent behind HBs 4127 and 4128. Guns do not belong anywhere that voting or election administration occur. The presence of guns can be intimidating to voters and election officials and can have a chilling effect on turnout, particularly among historically disenfranchised populations. In addition, our heated political culture has at times erupted not only at polling locations and absent voter counting boards but also at clerks offices and other election administration locations. These disruptions, already problematic, create the type of tense situations where a verbal dispute could easily escalate if guns are present.

HBs 4127 and 4128 should therefore go further and ban guns in all places and at all times where voting and election administration occur. For example, early voting is permitted - and will likely occur - beyond the days and hours detailed in HB 4127. And poll workers are present and working - opening polling locations and following closing procedures - before and after the polls are open on Election Day. Furthermore, while the bill rightly bans guns near drop boxes, where voters may drop off their voted absentee ballots, it does not ban guns at or near clerk's offices, where voters may pick up, vote, and submit an absentee ballot.

Michigan's expansion of ways in which people can vote necessitates protection of all methods of voting from potential intimidation. The same rules should apply wherever and whenever someone can get or return a ballot and wherever or whenever those ballots are being processed. Voters should feel confident that guns will not be present no matter which method they use to exercise their right to vote and election workers - clerks, poll workers, and others - should similarly feel confident that guns will not be present while they are administering our right to vote.

For the above-stated reasons, PTV supports HB 4127 and 4128 with expanded protections for all locations and times that voting and election administration occur.