



House Elections and Ethics Committee
April 12, 2022

Promote the Vote submits the below written testimony in opposition to HBs 4319, 4320, 5885 and 5886 and to HJR G.

Promote the Vote Opposes HBs 4319 and 4320 Because They Fail to Ensure that the Votes Cast in a Presidential Election Will Determine the Outcome of that Election.

The results of an election should be determined solely by the votes cast in the election, and the person with the most votes should be declared the winner. Instead, HBs 4319 and 4320 would create a fractured result, providing only a portion of the electoral college votes to the winning candidate. Reducing the number of electoral college votes awarded to the winner will, in turn, reduce Michigan's prominence in future presidential elections. Michigan lost one electoral college vote in the most recent round of redistricting, and we should be wary of further reducing our influence in future presidential elections. For these reasons, Promote the Vote opposes the bills.

Rather than reducing Michigan's prominence in presidential elections, Promote the Vote urges the Legislature to join with other states in adopting policies which will ensure that the outcomes of future presidential elections are determined by the votes cast by all Americans, across the entirety of our county. By moving toward a system that ensures the outcomes of presidential elections are determined by the national popular vote, we can increase the prominence of each and every eligible voter across the United States.

Promote the Vote Opposes HBs 5885 and 5886 Because Strengthening Our Signature Verification Process Requires Retaining Voters' Signatures in the QVF.

Promote the Vote strongly supports capturing a new signature when an enhanced driver's license or enhanced state ID is renewed by a voter. However, for the reasons explained below, to strengthen our signature verification process, Promote the Vote strongly recommends amending HBs 5885 and 5886 to require that the original signatures remain in the QVF along with the newly-captured ones.

Signature verification is the process by which an election official verifies a voter's identity by ensuring that their signature sufficiently agrees with the signature in their voter registration record. This process is used in multiple instances in Michigan's voting process. For example, for an absent voter ballot to be issued to a voter, Michigan Election Law requires that the signature on the absent voter ballot application sufficiently agree with the signature in the voter's registration record. Similarly, the signature on the absentee ballot envelope must sufficiently

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agree with the signature in the voter's registration record prior to an absentee ballot being counted.

A voter's signature can vary from year to year and from day to day. Numerous factors can contribute to a changing signature, from aging and injury to the surface that the signature was made on, especially if the surface was rough, uneven, or unstable. In addition, a voter may sometimes sign their full legal name, while at other times they may, for example, omit a second last name or use a diminutive of their full legal name. For all these reasons, Michigan's signature verification process would be strengthened if there were more - rather than fewer - signatures for each voter in the QVF for purposes of signature comparison. See Stanford Law School Law and Policy Lab, Signature Verification and Mail Ballots: Guaranteeing Access While Preserving Integrity - A Case Study of California's Every Vote Counts Act (May 2020) at 4 (available at https://www-cdn.law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SLS_Signature_Verification_Report-5-15-20-FINAL.pdf) (recommending that California improve its signature verification process by, among other things, asking voters to provide multiple samples of their signatures and developing "lifetime" databases of voter signatures to allow election workers to see how voters' signatures change over time).

Promote the Vote supports capturing a new signature when an enhanced driver's license or enhanced state ID is renewed. However, in order to strengthen our signature verification process, Promote the Vote strongly recommends that these new signatures be added to the QVF rather than replace the existing signatures, as HBs 5885 and 5886 require. Because HBs 5885 and 5886 require the new signatures to simply replace the old ones in the QVF, Promote the Vote opposes the bills.

Promote the Vote Opposes HJR G Because It Will Make It More Difficult for Voters to Engage in Their Constitutional Right to Direct Democracy.

By requiring petitions to be filed 150 days, rather than 120 days, before an election, HJR G will severely interfere with Michigan voters' constitutionally-guaranteed right to engage in direct democracy through the initiative process. HJR G will eliminate thirty of the most critical days for collecting signatures – during the warmest and most productive time for collecting signatures – thus making it extremely difficult for voters to engage in their constitutional right to direct democracy. Therefore, PTV opposes the resolution.