



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Bill Analysis

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BILL SUMMARY

Certification as an address confidentiality program participant

- Allows an adult, when changing residence, to apply to the Secretary of State to have the applicant's address kept confidential because the applicant fears for the applicant's safety or for the safety of a member of the applicant's household because the applicant or the household member is a victim of domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, rape, or sexual battery.
- Prohibits a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III sex offender/child-victim offender from participating in the address confidentiality program.
- Requires the application to be made with the assistance of an application assistant who is an employee or volunteer at an agency or organization that serves victims of domestic violence or other specified offenses, and specifies the information that must be included in the application.
- Prohibits any person who submits an application from knowingly making a false attestation, and specifies that whoever violates that prohibition is guilty of a first degree misdemeanor.

- Requires the Secretary of State, upon receiving a properly completed application, to certify the applicant as a program participant and to provide certain information to the participant, including a unique program participant identification number.
- Specifies that a program certification is valid for four years, describes the process to renew that certification, and allows the Secretary of State to prescribe a grace period during which a program participant whose certification has expired may renew it without being considered to have left the program.

Secretary of State mailing address

- Requires the Secretary of State to designate an address for program participants to use to receive mail.
- Generally requires a government entity to use the address designated by the Secretary of State as a program participant's address, and allows a program participant to request that the participant's employer, school, or institution of higher education use the address.
- Requires the Secretary of State to forward all first class mail that it receives for a program participant to the participant, and allows the Secretary to contract with the U.S. Postal Service to establish special postal rates for those mailings.
- Specifies procedures for the Secretary of State to act as a program participant's agent for the purpose of receiving service of process, and requests that the Ohio Supreme Court revise the Rules of Civil Procedure to allow service to be made in that manner.

Confidential addresses

- Specifies that the address of a program participant's residence, school, institution of higher education, business, or place of employment, as specified on the participant's application or on a notice of change of name or address, is confidential and is not a public record.
- Specifies that the confidential name, address, and other personally identifiable information of a program participant in the address confidentiality program, and records or portions of records pertaining to that program that identify the number of program participants that reside within a precinct, ward, township, municipal corporation, county, or any other geographic area smaller than the state, are not public records under the Public Records Law.
- Prohibits a person who has access to a confidential address or telephone number because of the person's employment or official position from knowingly disclosing it



to any person, except as required by law, and specifies that a violation of that prohibition is a first degree misdemeanor.

- Requires the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG) to contain the names, confidential addresses, and telephone numbers of program participants and grants access to this information in OHLEG to only chiefs of police, village marshals, county sheriffs, county prosecuting attorneys, and a designee of each.
- Provides a procedure for a chief legal officer to petition for access to a confidential address for a legitimate governmental purpose, generally prohibits a person who obtains a confidential address from knowingly disclosing that address, and specifies that a violation of that prohibition is a first degree misdemeanor.
- Establishes that the state is immune from liability in any civil action or proceeding involving the performance or nonperformance of a public duty under the address confidentiality program, except under specified circumstances.

Voting by program participants

- Allows a participant in the address confidentiality program who is eligible to vote to request the board of elections to keep the participant's voter registration record confidential, and specifies the required contents of the application form.
- Requires that the application be treated as the participant's voter registration record and be stored in a secure manner, such that only the members of the board of elections, the director, and the deputy director have access to it.
- Requires the participant's registration to appear in the Statewide Voter Registration Database and the official registration list, but with the participant's program participant identification number instead of the participant's residence address and precinct, and prohibits information concerning the participant from appearing in any pollbook or version of the Database or the official registration list that is available to the public.
- Permits a program participant who has a confidential voter registration record to vote only absentee or by provisional ballot, using the participant's program participant identification number instead of the address at which the participant is registered to vote.
- Requires the director and the deputy director of the board of elections personally to process absent voter's ballot identification envelopes received from program participants and requires the board of elections to decide any challenge to such a ballot.



- Specifies additional procedures for provisional voting by a program participant who has moved or had a change of name and has not submitted a notice of change of residence or change of name to the board of elections.
- Prohibits observers from witnessing the processing of ballots cast by electors who have confidential voter registration records in a manner that would permit the observers to learn the identities or residence addresses of those electors.
- Prohibits a person who challenges the right to vote of a program participant who has a confidential voter registration record from receiving notice of or attending any hearing concerning the challenge, and specifies that any records created as a result of the challenge that include the elector's residence address or precinct must not be open to public inspection.
- Provides a process for a person who has a confidential voter registration record and who ceases being a program participant or who wishes to cease having a confidential voter registration record to have the person's registration treated in the same manner as other registrations or to cancel the person's registration.

Exiting the program

- Requires the Secretary of State to cancel a program participant's certification if the participant's application contained false statements, if the participant applies to exit the program, or if the certification has expired.
- Permits the Secretary of State to cancel a program participant's certification if the participant has not updated the participant's address within 30 days after any of the participant's information changes and the participant has been unreachable for 60 days or more.
- Requires the Secretary of State, upon canceling a certification, to notify the director of the board of elections of the county in which the former program participant resides.

Fines and program funding

- Permits a court that is sentencing an offender for certain offenses, including domestic violence, rape, and trafficking in persons, to impose an additional fine of not less than \$70 nor more than \$500.
- Requires that fine to be paid into the Address Confidentiality Program Fund, which the bill creates in the state treasury for the purpose of administering the program.

Secretary of State rulemaking

- Requires the Secretary of State to adopt rules under the Administrative Procedure Act to facilitate the administration of the address confidentiality program.

Federal law enforcement officer residential and familial information

- Establishes that the residential and familial information of federal law enforcement officers does not constitute a public record under the Public Records Law.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certification as an address confidentiality program participant	6
Application	6
Processing applications.....	7
Application information updates	8
Renewal of certification	8
Secretary of State mailing address.....	8
Use of address.....	8
Mail forwarding.....	9
Service of process.....	9
Confidential addresses.....	10
Generally.....	10
Law enforcement and prosecutor access	10
State immunity	11
Voting by program participants.....	11
Application to keep voter registration record confidential	11
Processing confidential voter registration applications	12
Treatment of confidential voter registration records.....	13
Change of name or address on a confidential voter registration record	13
Absent voting	14
Casting absent voter's ballots.....	14
Counting absent voter's ballots.....	15
Provisional voting.....	16
Casting provisional ballots – generally.....	16
Casting provisional ballots – change of name or address	16
Counting provisional ballots.....	17
Former resident's presidential ballots	17
Challenges to confidential voter registration records	18
Ceasing to have a confidential voter registration record	18
Exiting the program.....	19
Fines and program funding	20
Secretary of State rulemaking	21
Federal law enforcement officer residential and familial information.....	21



CONTENT AND OPERATION

The bill requires the Secretary of State to administer an address confidentiality program for victims of domestic violence, menacing by stalking, human trafficking, trafficking in persons, rape, or sexual battery. A program participant's address must be kept confidential, and the Secretary of State must receive mail on the participant's behalf and forward it to the participant's confidential address.

Certification as an address confidentiality program participant

Application

Under the bill, an adult, when changing residence, may apply to the Secretary of State to have the applicant's address kept confidential because the applicant fears for the applicant's safety or for the safety of a member of the applicant's household because the applicant or household member is a victim of domestic violence, menacing by stalking, human trafficking, trafficking in persons, rape, or sexual battery. Additionally, a parent or guardian, when changing residence, may apply to have a minor, incompetent, or ward certified as a program participant. The bill prohibits a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III sex offender/child-victim offender from participating in the program.

Applicants must apply with the assistance of an application assistant who is an employee or volunteer at an agency or organization that serves victims of domestic violence, menacing by stalking, human trafficking, trafficking in persons, rape, or sexual battery. Application assistants must receive training and certification from the Secretary of State to help individuals complete applications for the program.

The application must be filed with the Secretary of State on a form and in the manner prescribed by the Secretary and must include all of the following:

- A notarized statement that the applicant fears for the safety of the applicant, a member of the applicant's household, or the minor, incompetent, or ward on whose behalf the application is made because the applicant, household member, minor, incompetent, or ward is a victim of domestic violence, menacing by stalking, human trafficking, trafficking in persons, rape, or sexual battery;
- A knowing and voluntary designation of the Secretary of State as the applicant's agent for the purposes of receiving service of process and the receipt of mail;
- The mailing address and telephone number or numbers at which the Secretary of State may contact the applicant;

- The address or addresses of the applicant's residence, school, institution of higher education, business, or place of employment that the applicant requests not be disclosed for the reason that disclosure will increase the risk that the applicant, household member, minor, incompetent, or ward will be threatened or physically harmed by another person;
- The applicant's signature, the name and signature of the application assistant, and the date on which the applicant and the assistant signed the application;
- A voluntary release and waiver of all future claims against the state for any claim that may arise from participation in the address confidentiality program, except for a claim based on the performance or nonperformance of a public duty that was manifestly outside the scope of the officer's or employee's office or employment or in which the officer or employee acted with malicious purpose, in bad faith, or in a wanton or reckless manner.

The bill prohibits an applicant from knowingly making a false attestation in the notarized statement described above. Whoever violates that prohibition is guilty of a first degree misdemeanor, which under continuing law is punishable by a maximum sentence of imprisonment for six months and a fine of \$1,000.¹

Processing applications

Upon receiving a properly completed application for the address confidentiality program, the bill requires the Secretary of State to certify the applicant or the minor, incompetent, or ward on whose behalf the application is filed as a program participant. The Secretary then must designate each eligible address listed in the application as a confidential address and provide all of the following to the program participant:²

- A unique program participant identification number;
- Information concerning the manner in which the program participant may use the Secretary of State as the program participant's agent for the purposes of receiving mail and receiving service of process (see "**Secretary of State mailing address**," below);

¹ R.C. 111.41, 111.42(A) and (F), 111.99(A) and (D), 2929.24, not in the bill, and 2929.28.

² R.C. 111.42(B).



- Information concerning the process to register to vote and to vote as a program participant, if the program participant is eligible to vote (see "**Voting by program participants**," below).

Application information updates

The bill requires a program participant to update the participant's application information, within 30 days after any change has occurred, by submitting a notice of change to the Secretary of State on a form prescribed by the Secretary. If the participant fails to submit the appropriate update, and is found to be unreachable for a period of 60 days or more, the Secretary of State may, with proper notice, cancel the participant from the program.³ Under other specified circumstances, see "**Exiting the program**," below, the Secretary of State must cancel a program participant's certification.

Renewal of certification

A program participant's certification is valid for four years after the date the application was filed unless the certification is withdrawn or invalidated before the end of that period (see "**Exiting the program**," below). A participant who continues to be eligible to participate in the program may renew that certification by submitting a renewal application to the Secretary of State with the assistance of an application assistant. The renewal application must be on a form prescribed by the Secretary and must contain the same types of information as in the original application. A participant who renews the participant's certification must continue to use the same program participant identification number.

Under the bill, the Secretary of State may prescribe by rule a grace period during which a program participant whose certification has expired may renew the certification without being considered to have left the program.⁴

Secretary of State mailing address

Use of address

Under the bill, the Secretary of State must designate an address for program participants to use to receive mail. In general, a governmental entity must use the address designated by the Secretary of State as the program participant's address upon the participant's request. The bill defines "governmental entity" as the state, a political subdivision, or any department, agency, board, commission, or other instrumentality of

³ R.C. 111.42(C).

⁴ R.C. 111.42(D) and (E).



the state or a political subdivision. However, a board of elections is not required to use that address (see "**Voting by program participants**," below). And, a municipal-owned public utility is not required to use the address designated by the Secretary of State, although the bill specifies that confidential addresses maintained by a municipal-owned public utility are not a public record, and the utility and its employees must not release them.

Upon request of a program participant, the participant's employer, school, or institution of higher education must use the address designated by the Secretary of State as the participant's address.⁵

Mail forwarding

On each day that the Secretary of State's office is open for business, the office must place all first class mail that it receives for a program participant into an envelope or package and mail it to the participant at the mailing address the participant provided for that purpose. The bill permits the Secretary of State to contract with the U.S. Postal Service to establish special postal rates for mailing those envelopes or packages.⁶

Service of process

The bill also specifies procedures for the Secretary of State to act as a program participant's agent for the purpose of receiving service of process. The bill defines "process" as judicial process and all orders, demands, notices, or other papers required or permitted by law to be served on a program participant. For example, if a person wished to sue a program participant, continuing law would require the person to provide formal notice of the lawsuit to the program participant.

The bill allows a person who intends to serve process on an individual to request the Secretary of State to confirm whether the individual is a program participant. The Secretary of State must confirm whether the individual is a participant but must not disclose any other information concerning a participant. The Secretary of State may prescribe by rule the manner in which process may be served on the Secretary as the agent of a program participant. When the office of the Secretary of State receives service of process on behalf of a program participant, the office must immediately forward the process by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the program participant at the mailing address the participant provided for that purpose. The bill states that service of process upon the office of the Secretary of State on behalf of a program participant constitutes service upon the program participant under the Rules of Civil Procedure.

⁵ R.C. 111.41(C) and 111.43.

⁶ R.C. 111.43(C)(1).



The bill requests that the Ohio Supreme Court revise the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure to allow service of process to be made upon a program participant by serving the Secretary of State, as described above. The current rules generally do not permit an individual to designate an agent to receive service of process on the individual's behalf.⁷

Confidential addresses

Generally

The bill defines a "confidential address" as the address of a program participant's residence, school, institution of higher education, business, or place of employment, as specified on the participant's application or on a notice of change of name or address. Under the bill, the confidential name, address, and other personally identifiable information of a program participant in the address confidentiality program, and records or portions of records pertaining to that program that identify the number of program participants that reside within a precinct, ward, township, municipal corporation, county, or any other geographic area smaller than the state are not public records and must be kept confidential. And, the bill prohibits any person who has access to a confidential address or telephone number because of the person's employment or official position from knowingly disclosing that address or number to any person, except as required by law. Whoever violates one of these prohibitions is guilty of a first degree misdemeanor.⁸

Law enforcement and prosecutor access

The bill requires that the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG) contain the names, confidential addresses, and telephone numbers of program participants. (OHLEG is a statewide electronic database for law enforcement officers operated by the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation.) In order to facilitate inclusion of this information in OHLEG, the bill requires the Secretary of State to provide it to the Attorney General. And, the bill requires the Attorney General to adopt rules under the Administrative Procedure Act that grant access to information in OHLEG regarding a participant to only chiefs of police, village marshals, county sheriffs, county prosecuting attorneys, and a designee of each of these individuals.

The bill also provides a procedure for a city law director or a similar chief legal officer to request access to a program participant's confidential address or telephone

⁷ R.C. 111.41(F) and 111.43(C)(2); Section 3 of the bill; and *Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure*, Rule 4.2, available at: supremecourt.ohio.gov/LegalResources/Rules/civil/CivilProcedure.pdf, accessed January 15, 2016.

⁸ R.C. 111.41(B), 111.99(B) and (D), and 149.43(A)(1)(dd).



number for a legitimate governmental purpose. First, the officer may ask the Secretary of State to confirm whether the individual whose address or telephone number is sought is a program participant. The Secretary of State must provide that confirmation but must not disclose any other information concerning a program participant.

Then, the officer must petition the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas to order the Secretary of State to make that address or telephone number available to the petitioner. The court must set a date for a hearing, and the clerk of the court must serve a notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the hearing upon the petitioner and the Secretary of State. When the Secretary of State receives the notice, the Secretary must immediately send a copy of it to the program participant by certified mail, return receipt requested.

The petitioner must appear at the hearing, and the program participant or the participant's attorney also may appear and be heard. After the hearing and considering the testimony, the court must issue the requested order only if it appears to the court by clear and convincing evidence that the disclosure of the address or telephone number to the petitioner is necessary for a legitimate governmental purpose. The bill prohibits any person who obtains a confidential address or telephone number from OHLEG from knowingly disclosing that address or telephone number to any person, except as is necessary for a legitimate governmental purpose. A violation of that prohibition is a first degree misdemeanor.⁹

State immunity

The bill establishes that the state is immune from liability in any civil action or proceeding involving the performance or nonperformance of a public duty under the address confidentiality program, except if the performance or nonperformance was manifestly outside the scope of the state officer's or employee's office or employment or the officer or employee acted with malicious purpose, in bad faith, or in a wanton or reckless manner.¹⁰

Voting by program participants

Application to keep voter registration record confidential

The bill allows a participant in the address confidentiality program who is eligible to vote to request the board of elections of the county in which the participant resides to keep the participant's voter registration record confidential. The participant

⁹ R.C. 109.57, 111.46, and 111.99(C) and (D).

¹⁰ R.C. 111.47(A).



must submit an application to the director of the board, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, which includes all of the following:¹¹

- The information required under the Election Law to register to vote, which includes the applicant's name, residence address, and date of birth, a form of identification, the current date, and the applicant's signature;
- The applicant's program participant identification number;
- If the applicant is currently registered to vote in another county or another state, the address at which the applicant is registered and a statement that the applicant authorizes the director to instruct the appropriate authority to cancel the applicant's existing voter registration;
- A statement that the applicant understands that during the time the applicant chooses to have a confidential voter registration record, the applicant may vote only by absent voter's ballots and the applicant may provide the applicant's program participant identification number instead of the applicant's residence address on an application for absent voter's ballots or on an absent voter's ballot identification envelope statement of voter.

Processing confidential voter registration applications

Upon receiving a valid application to keep a voter registration record confidential, the bill requires the director or the deputy director of the board of elections to contact the Secretary of State to confirm that the program participant identification number provided on the application matches the number the Secretary issued to the program participant.

If the program participant is currently registered to vote in the county, the director or the deputy director must remove the residence address and precinct information from the participant's voter registration record, the Statewide Voter Registration Database, and the official registration list. The director or the deputy director also must remove the participant's name and registration information from any pollbook, poll list, or signature pollbook in which it appears and from any publicly available registration list in which it appears.

If the program participant is currently registered to vote in another county, the director or the deputy director must notify the board of elections of that county to

¹¹ R.C. 111.44(A) and 3503.14, not in the bill.



cancel the participant's registration. The participant's existing registration must be considered to have been transferred to the county in which the participant currently resides. If the participant submitted the application less than 30 days before the day of an election, the participant is eligible to vote in that election, notwithstanding the provision of the Election Law that requires applicants to be registered not later than the 30th day before the day of an election to be eligible to vote in it. (Under continuing law, an elector who is registered to vote in Ohio and who has not updated the elector's name or address before that deadline may vote in the election. Depending on the circumstances, the elector may cast a regular ballot or a provisional ballot.)

If the program participant is currently registered to vote in another state, the director or the deputy director must notify the appropriate authority in that state to cancel the participant's registration.

After processing the application, the director or the deputy director must promptly send an acknowledgment notice to the program participant on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State.¹²

Treatment of confidential voter registration records

A program participant's application to have the participant's voter registration record kept confidential must be treated as the participant's voter registration record and must be stored in a secure manner, such that only the members of the board of elections, the director, and the deputy director have access to it. The participant's registration must appear in the Statewide Voter Registration Database, but the director or the deputy director must record the participant's program participant identification number in the Database and the official registration list instead of the participant's residence address and precinct. No information concerning the participant, including the participant's name, may appear in the version of the Database that is available to the public. Further, no information about the program participant may appear in any version of any official registration list that is available to the public or in any pollbook, poll list, or signature pollbook.¹³

Change of name or address on a confidential voter registration record

Under the bill, a program participant who has a confidential voter registration record and who has had a change of name or address may submit another application to have the registration record kept confidential that includes the participant's updated information. The director or the deputy director of the board of elections must treat that

¹² R.C. 111.44(B), 3503.01, not in the bill, and 3503.16.

¹³ R.C. 111.44(B) and (C)(1), 3503.13, 3503.23, 3503.26, and 3509.09.



application as a notice of change of name or change of address. Alternatively, the program participant may cast a provisional ballot using the participant's new name or address (see "**Provisional voting**," below).

If the participant still resides in the same county, the director or the deputy director must replace the participant's existing registration form with the new registration form or with the information contained in the provisional ballot affirmation, as applicable. If the participant has moved to another county, the director or the deputy director must cancel the participant's existing registration form and transmit the new form to the director of the board of elections of the county in which the participant currently resides. The director of the board of elections of the participant's new county must process the form as a new application to have a voter registration record kept confidential.¹⁴

Absent voting

Casting absent voter's ballots

Under the bill, a program participant who has a confidential voter registration record may vote only absentee or by provisional ballot. In order to vote by absent voter's ballots, a participant must apply to the board of elections in the same manner as other absent voters, except that the participant may provide the participant's program participant identification number on the application instead of the address at which the participant is registered to vote. The participant also may provide that identification number instead of the participant's residence address on the identification envelope statement of voter when the participant returns the participant's ballots. Each identification envelope statement of voter must include the following field:

If I have a confidential voter registration record, I am providing my program participant identification number instead of my residence address:

When the Secretary of State or a board of elections mails an application for absent voter's ballots or an absent voter's ballot identification envelope statement of voter to a program participant who has a confidential voter registration, the participant's address must not be preprinted on the application or statement.¹⁵

¹⁴ R.C. 111.44(D) and 3503.16(A).

¹⁵ R.C. 111.44(C)(2), 3509.03, 3509.04, 3511.02, and 3511.05.



Counting absent voter's ballots

The bill prescribes a modified procedure for counting absent voter's ballots cast by electors who have confidential voter registration records. The bill specifies that the director must not deliver to the voting location manager identification envelopes cast by electors who provided a program participant identification number instead of a residence address on the identification envelope and must not inform the voting location manager of the names and voting residences of persons who have confidential voter registration records. Rather, the director and the deputy director must personally process absent voter's ballots that include a program participant identification number instead of a residence address on the identification envelope. Under continuing law, absent voter's ballots generally are processed by precinct election officials in the voting location for the precinct or at the office of the board of elections. Further, the bill specifies that if absent voter's ballots are delivered to the precinct election officials, but the elector's name does not appear in the pollbook or poll list or signature pollbook (as would be the case with a program participant with a confidential voter registration record), the precinct officials must deliver those ballots to the director to be processed along with the program participants' ballots.

In counting those absent voter's ballots, the director and the deputy director must examine the identification envelope statement of voter to determine whether it is complete and whether the information in it conforms to the information in the Statewide Voter Registration Database and in the voter's confidential voter registration record, similar to the process for verifying other absent voter's ballots. However, an identification envelope statement of voter that does not include the voter's address is not considered incomplete if the voter has a confidential voter registration record and the statement includes the voter's program participant identification number.

If the director and the deputy director find that the statement is incomplete or that it does not conform to the Statewide Voter Registration Database or the confidential voter registration record, the director and the deputy director must mail a written notice to the voter informing the voter of the defect, in the same manner as is done for other absent voters. The voter must provide the necessary information to the board in writing on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State not later than the seventh day after the day of the election in order for the ballot to be counted.

The director and the deputy director may challenge the ballot on any of the same grounds that other absent voter's ballots may be challenged. If such a challenge is made, the board of elections must decide whether to sustain the challenge. If the ballot is not challenged or if a challenge is made and not sustained, the director and the deputy director must open the envelope without defacing the statement of voter and without mutilating the ballots. Then, they must remove the ballots and transmit them to the



election officials to be counted with other absent voter's ballots from that precinct. The voter's registration card also must be marked to indicate that the person has voted, but the voter's name must not be marked in the pollbook or poll list or signature pollbook, as it would be for other absent voters.

Finally, the bill provides that observers, who generally are permitted to witness the examination and opening of identification envelopes and the counting of absent voter's ballots, must not be permitted to witness that process for ballots cast by electors who have confidential voter registration records in a manner that would permit the observers to learn the identities or residence addresses of those electors.¹⁶

Provisional voting

Casting provisional ballots – generally

If a program participant has a confidential voter registration record, the participant may vote by provisional ballot instead of by absent voter's ballots. In order to do so, the participant must appear at the polling place for the precinct in which the participant resides. In general, the bill permits the participant to provide the participant's program participant identification number on the provisional ballot affirmation instead of the participant's residence address. The bill adds the following field to the provisional ballot affirmation form:¹⁷

If you have a confidential voter registration record, write your address confidentiality program participant identification number:

If you have a confidential voter registration record and you have not moved without updating your voter registration, you may provide your participant identification number instead of your current address.

Casting provisional ballots – change of name or address

The bill specifies that if a program participant with a confidential voter registration record has moved or had a change of name and has not filed a notice of change of residence or change of name with the board of elections, the participant may cast a provisional ballot, similar to other electors who have not updated their registrations. Under continuing law, the board must treat such a provisional ballot affirmation as a notice of change of residence or change of name, as applicable.

¹⁶ R.C. 3509.05, 3509.06, 3509.07, 3511.11, and 3511.12.

¹⁷ 111.44(C)(2) and (D)(1)(b), 3505.181(A)(1), and 3505.182.



If the participant is casting a provisional ballot because of a change of address, the participant must provide the participant's current address in the same manner as other provisional voters instead of providing a program participant identification number. And, if the participant has had a change of name or address, the participant must complete and sign a statement, under penalty of election falsification, attesting that the participant moved or had a change of name on or prior to the day of the election, has voted a provisional ballot at the polling place for the precinct in which the participant resides, and will not vote or attempt to vote at any other location or by any other method for that particular election.¹⁸

Counting provisional ballots

Under the bill, with one exception, the same counting standards apply to provisional ballots cast by program participants who have confidential voter registration records as to other provisional ballots. If the individual who cast a provisional ballot has a confidential voter registration record and has included the individual's program participant identification number on the provisional ballot affirmation, the affirmation is not required to contain the individual's current address in order to be counted.

Additionally, the bill requires that when the board of elections processes provisional ballots, observers must not be permitted to witness the determination of the eligibility to be counted of, or the counting of, provisional ballots cast by electors who have confidential voter registration records in a manner that would permit the observers to learn the identities or residence addresses of those electors.¹⁹

Former resident's presidential ballots

The bill modifies the existing process by which a U.S. citizen who has moved out of the state may vote for presidential and vice-presidential electors in Ohio. A person who wishes to do so must submit to the board of elections a certificate of intent to vote only for presidential and vice-presidential electors. Under the bill, a program participant who has a confidential voter registration record may provide the participant's program participant identification number on the certificate of intent instead of the participant's residence address or precinct. Further, the bill specifies that the participant must not appear on the list of persons who have filed certificates of intent and who appear to be entitled to vote at a particular polling place. The

¹⁸ R.C. 3503.16(H).

¹⁹ R.C. 3505.183.



participant may vote for presidential and vice-presidential electors only by casting absent voter's ballots or a provisional ballot.²⁰

Challenges to confidential voter registration records

Under the bill, if an elector challenges the right to vote of a program participant who has a confidential voter registration record, the person who filed the challenge must not receive notice of the date and time of any hearing held concerning the challenge, must not be permitted to attend the hearing, and must not receive notice of the disposition of the challenge. Similarly, if an elector applies to have the precinct registration list corrected with respect to another elector's registration and the registration in question is confidential, the person who filed the application must not receive those notices and must not be permitted to attend any hearing. Notwithstanding the Open Meetings Law, such an application or challenge hearing must not be open to the public, and any records created as a result of the application or challenge that include the elector's residence address or precinct must not be open to public inspection.

Current law requires the director of the board of elections to notify the person who filed the application or challenge of the date and time of the hearing, and the hearing likely would be considered public under the Open Meetings Law.²¹

Ceasing to have a confidential voter registration record

The bill requires a person who has a confidential voter registration record and who ceases being a program participant or who wishes to cease having a confidential voter registration record to submit an application to the board of elections on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State. The form must include all of the following:

- The information required under the Election Law to register to vote;
- The person's program participant identification number;
- A statement that the person has ceased being a program participant or that the person wishes to cease having a confidential voter registration record;
- A statement that the director should treat the person's existing voter registration form in the same manner as other voter registration forms or that the director should cancel the person's voter registration.

²⁰ R.C. 3504.02 and 3504.04.

²¹ R.C. 3503.24.



Under the bill, when the Secretary of State cancels a person's certification as a program participant, the Secretary also must notify the director of the board of elections of the county in which the former participant resides (see "**Exiting the program**," below).

Upon receiving an application to have a person's voter registration form be treated in the same manner as other registration forms, or upon receiving a notice from the Secretary of State that a person has exited the address confidentiality program, the director or the deputy director must store the person's registration form in the same manner as other voter registration forms and must remove the person's program participant identification number from the registration form and from the Statewide Voter Registration Database. Further, the director or the deputy director must ensure that the Database and any poll list, pollbook, or registration list accurately reflect the person's current name and registration information. If the director receives that application or notice less than 30 days before the day of an election, the bill specifies that the elector is eligible to vote in that election, notwithstanding the provision of the Election Law that requires applicants to be registered not later than the 30th day before the day of an election to be eligible to vote in it.

Upon receiving an application described above from a person who wishes to have the person's voter registration canceled, the bill requires the director or the deputy director to cancel that registration.²²

Exiting the program

The bill requires the Secretary of State to cancel a program participant's certification if any of the following are true:

- The program participant's application contained one or more false statements.
- The program participant has filed a written, notarized request with the Secretary of State, on a form prescribed by the Secretary, asking to cease being a program participant.
- The program participant's certification has expired and the participant has not renewed the certification not later than the deadline to do so (see "**Renewal of certification**," above).

²² R.C. 111.44(E) and (F), 111.45(B), 3503.01, not in the bill, and 3503.21.



Additionally, if the program participant has not updated the participant's application information within 30 days after any change has occurred, and the participant is found to be unreachable for a period of 60 days or more, the Secretary of State may, with proper notice, cancel the participant from the program (see "**Application information updates**," above).

Upon canceling a certification, the Secretary of State must notify the director of the board of elections of the county in which the former program participant resides (see "**Voting by program participants**," above).²³

Fines and program funding

Under the bill, a court that is sentencing an offender for any of the following offenses may impose a fine of not less than \$70 nor more than \$500, in addition to any other fine that may be imposed:

- Domestic violence;
- Menacing by stalking;
- Rape or sexual battery;
- Trafficking in persons;
- Any of the following offenses, if the offender also is convicted of a specification that charges that the offender knowingly committed the offense in furtherance of human trafficking:
 - Kidnapping or abduction;
 - Compelling prostitution or promoting prostitution;
 - Engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity;
 - Certain types of illegal use of a minor in a nudity-oriented material or performance;
 - Certain types of endangering children.

The fine must be submitted to the Treasurer of State to be credited to the Address Confidentiality Program Fund, which the bill creates in the state treasury. The bill requires the Secretary of State to use the fund for the purpose of administering the

²³ R.C. 111.42(C) and 111.45.

program. The fund must consist of money received as a result of the fines described above and any money appropriated to the fund by the General Assembly or donated to the fund.²⁴

Secretary of State rulemaking

The bill requires the Secretary of State to adopt rules under the Administrative Procedure Act to facilitate the administration of the address confidentiality program.²⁵

Federal law enforcement officer residential and familial information

The bill adds federal law enforcement officers²⁶ to the list of law enforcement related individuals whose information is not a public record. The current Ohio Public Records Law specifies that the residential and familial information of various specified law enforcement officers is not a public record.²⁷ However, that law sets forth a procedure under which a journalist may make a written request for that information. The request must state that the disclosure of the information sought would be in the public interest.²⁸

A law enforcement officer whose residential and familial information is not a public record also may request that a public office redact the officer's address from any record made available to the general public on the Internet. The bill establishes this right for federal law enforcement officers.²⁹

Current law specifies that the residential and familial information of the following individuals is not a public record: a peace officer, a parole officer, a probation officer, a bailiff, a prosecuting attorney, an assistant prosecuting attorney, a correctional employee, a community-based correctional facility employee, a youth services employee, a firefighter, an EMT, or an investigator of the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation.³⁰

²⁴ R.C. 111.48, 2929.18(B)(10), and 2929.28(D).

²⁵ R.C. 111.47(B).

²⁶ "Federal law enforcement officer" means any officer of the United States who is authorized by federal law to conduct any investigation of, and make any arrest for, any offense against the United States in violation of federal law (R.C. 9.88, not in the bill).

²⁷ R.C. 149.43(A)(7).

²⁸ R.C. 149.43(B)(9).

²⁹ R.C. 149.45.

³⁰ R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(p).



HISTORY

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