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From: Marty Exline

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To: MO Disability Policy/Law Listserv

Subject: [Modisabilaw] HB 1278 - Accessible Voting Equipment

HB 1278 – Accessible Voting Equipment

Rep. English

This bill is identical to the one that Rep. English sponsored last year. It has not been assigned to a committee. Last year's bill was not assigned to a committee by the Speaker until late in the session, so did not get a committee hearing.

The bill requires at least one accessible voting machine to be available for use at each polling place for all statewide elections, elections for the general assembly or local elections.

Currently, the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires one accessible machine at each polling place for all federal elections. However, for elections when there are no national contests such as President, U.S. Senate, or U.S. Representative, the requirement does not apply. Local election officials do not always make accessible equipment available for elections where there are no federal contests.

HB1278 also includes a provision that any additional election costs for the maintenance and use of the accessible machines during statewide and general assembly elections shall be paid for by the state and subject to appropriations.

HB1278 also specifies that voters are not required to provide confirmation of blindness or visual impairment to use accessible voting machines. The bill also mentions that "blind or visually impaired voters" may also vote by absentee ballot if they choose -- although this is an already an option for persons with disabilities.

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