



STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN CALLEY
LT. GOVERNOR

January 5, 2016

Michigan House of Representatives
Michigan Senate
State Capitol Building
Lansing, Michigan 48913

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today I signed Senate Bill 13 into law. I am taking the opportunity to explain why I signed this bill, as it has been the subject of substantial public debate.

Under SB 13, Michigan joins 40 other states that require voters to select an individual for each elective office, rather than simply selecting a political party. As Governor, I have strived to put people before politics and strongly encourage voters to do the same. Under this new law, voters will select an individual for each office, rather than simply marking Republican or Democrat on their ballot.

As SB 13 moved through the legislative process, local elections officials and others expressed concern that eliminating the straight ticket voting option could lead to longer lines on Election Day, voter frustration, and possibly result in disenfranchised voters. They worry about longer lines because Michigan voters see extensive ballots, with multiple proposals at the state and local level, as well as candidates for municipal, school and judicial offices.

To address these concerns, the House of Representatives passed SB 13, tie-barred to House Bill 4724, legislation allowing for a secured form of no-reason absentee voting - meaning SB 13 couldn't become law unless HB 4724 did. However, as SB 13 was amended by both houses of the Legislature, it was ultimately passed without a tie-bar to HB 4724.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Michigan is one of only 13 states that does not allow for some form of early or no-reason absentee voting. Updating Michigan's archaic absentee voting law, and bringing Michigan in line with other states regarding early, or easier, access to the polls is critical as we continue to reinvent Michigan. HB 4724 passed the House and is currently in the Senate. Voters should have at least 15 days to vote by absentee before election day. I urge the Senate to pass the bill and send it to me as soon as possible to be signed into law. This will not only provide greater access to the polls, it will also help alleviate long lines at the ballot box.

This new law includes an appropriation of \$5 million for the purchase of new voting equipment to ease Election Day administration and future investments will be considered as needed. These resources, along with a responsible no-reason absentee voting program, will allow Michigan to administer elections quickly and fairly, and will keep the state consistent with the majority of other states.

SB 13 is simply one piece of how Michigan can modernize its election practices. I urge the Legislature to further engage in this discussion and ask the Senate to pass HB 4724 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Snyder", written in a cursive style.

Rick Snyder
Governor