

AN ACT

RELATING TO ELECTIONS; ALLOWING IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING ON ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES UP TO 5:00 P.M. THE SATURDAY PRECEDING ELECTION DAY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. Section 1-6-5 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1969, Chapter 240, Section 131, as amended) is amended to read:

"1-6-5. PROCESSING APPLICATION--ISSUANCE OF BALLOT-- MARKING AND DELIVERY OF BALLOT IN PERSON.--

A. The county clerk shall mark each completed absentee ballot application with the date and time of receipt in the clerk's office and enter the required information in the absentee ballot register. The county clerk shall then determine if the applicant is a voter, an absent uniformed services voter or an overseas voter.

B. If the applicant has no valid certificate of registration on file in the county and he is not a federal qualified elector or if the applicant states he is a federal qualified elector but his application indicates he is not a federal qualified elector, no absentee ballot shall be issued and the county clerk shall mark the application "rejected" and file the application in a separate file from those accepted.

C. The county clerk shall notify in writing each applicant of the fact of acceptance or rejection of his

application and, if rejected, shall explain why the application was rejected.

D. If the county clerk finds that the applicant is a voter or a federal qualified elector, the county clerk shall mark the application "accepted" and deliver an absentee ballot to the voter in the county clerk's office or mail to the applicant an absentee ballot and the required envelopes for use in returning the ballot. Acceptance of an application of a federal qualified elector constitutes registration for the election in which the ballot is to be cast. Acceptance of an application from an overseas voter who is not an absent uniformed services voter constitutes a request for changing information on the certificate of registration of any such voter. No absent voter shall be permitted to change his party affiliation during those periods when change of party affiliation is prohibited by the Election Code. Upon delivery of an absentee ballot to a voter in the county clerk's office or mailing of an absentee ballot to an applicant who is a voter, an appropriate designation shall be made on the signature line of the signature roster next to the name of the voter who has been provided or mailed an absentee ballot.

E. If an application for an absentee ballot is delivered in person to the county clerk and is accepted, the county clerk shall provide the voter an absentee ballot and it shall be marked by the applicant in a voting booth of a

type prescribed by the secretary of state, sealed in the proper envelopes and otherwise properly executed and returned to the county clerk or his authorized representative before the voter leaves the office of the county clerk. The act of marking the absentee ballot in the office of the county clerk shall be a convenience to the voter in the delivery of the absentee ballot and does not make the office of the county clerk a polling place subject to the requirements of a polling place in the Election Code other than is provided in this subsection. It shall be unlawful to solicit votes, display or otherwise make accessible any posters, signs or other forms of campaign literature whatsoever in the clerk's office. Absentee ballots may be marked in person during the regular hours and days of business at the county clerk's office from 8:00 a.m. on the fortieth day preceding the election up until 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday immediately prior to the date of the election. In marking the absentee ballot, the voter may be assisted by one person of the voter's choice.

F. Commencing with the twentieth day prior to an election, an absent voter may vote in person at the county clerk's office or on an electronic voting machine at an alternate location established by the county clerk. In class A counties, the county clerk shall establish not less than four alternate locations as a convenience to the voters. Absentee voting may be done at the county clerk's

office or an alternate location during the regular hours of business from 8:00 a.m. on the twentieth day prior to the election until 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday immediately prior to the election. The county clerk shall ensure that procedures established for processing an absent voter application and for voting by absentee ballot are complied with at each alternative location.

SB 296
Page 4

G. Absentee ballots shall be air mailed to applicants temporarily domiciled inside or outside the continental limits of the United States not later than on the Thursday immediately prior to the date of the election.

H. No absentee ballot shall be delivered or mailed by the county clerk to any person other than the applicant for such ballot.

I. The county clerk shall accept and process with respect to a primary or general election for any federal office, any otherwise valid voter registration application from an absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter if the application is received not less than thirty days before the election. The county clerk shall also accept and process federal write-in absentee ballots from overseas voters in general elections for federal offices in accordance with the provisions of Section 103 of the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

J. The secretary of state and each county clerk shall make reasonable efforts to publicize and inform voters

of the times and locations for absentee voting."