

By: Representative Owen

To:

COPY

HOUSE BILL NO. _____

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING FOR ANY QUALIFIED
 2 VOTER WHO VOTES ABSENTEE IN PERSON AT THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
 3 DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2020; TO PROVIDE THAT ALL ABSENTEE VOTES CAST
 4 IN PERSON AT THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR SHALL BE CAST ON EITHER A
 5 DIRECT RECORDING ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEM OR USING AN OPTICAL MARK
 6 READING EQUIPMENT MACHINE UNLESS THE REGISTRAR DETERMINES THAT
 7 THOSE METHODS WOULD BE TOO EXPENSIVE OR INEFFICIENT, IN WHICH CASE
 8 ABSENTEE PAPER BALLOTS MAY BE USED; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

10 **SECTION 1.** (1) At any election that occurs in calendar year
 11 2020, a qualified voter may vote in person by an absentee ballot
 12 for any reason. A qualified voter who votes in person by an
 13 absentee ballot shall not be required to complete an absentee
 14 ballot application before casting his or her absentee ballot.
 15 These provisions shall not apply to absentee ballots received by
 16 mail.

17 (2) (a) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b) of
 18 this subsection (2), all absentee votes cast in person at the
 19 office of the registrar as provided in subsection (1) of this
 20 section shall be cast on either a direct recording electronic
 21 voting system or on a ballot that is fed through an optical mark



22 reading equipment machine not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday
23 immediately preceding elections held on Tuesday, the Thursday
24 immediately preceding elections held on Saturday, or the second
25 day immediately preceding the date of elections held on other
26 days. At the close of business each day at the office of the
27 registrar, the voting system used shall be sealed and not unsealed
28 until the beginning of the next business day. Upon the effective
29 date of this act, the election officials shall prepare either
30 official ballots for the direct recording electronic voting system
31 or an official ballot that is fed through an optical mark reading
32 equipment machine. Such ballots shall comply with the provisions
33 of this section.

34 (b) If the registrar of any county determines that
35 conducting absentee voting in the office of the registrar as
36 provided in subsection (1) of this section with either a direct
37 recording electronic voting system or with an official ballot that
38 is fed through an optical mark reading equipment machine will be
39 too expensive or inefficient, that registrar may choose to conduct
40 the absentee voting in the office of the registrar with absentee
41 paper ballots that shall be voted and placed inside the official
42 envelop provided by the registrar and then deposited into the
43 sealed ballot box not later than 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday
44 immediately preceding elections held on Tuesday, the Thursday
45 immediately preceding elections held on Saturday, or the second
46 day immediately preceding the date of elections held on other



47 days. At the close of business each day at the office of the
48 registrar, the ballot box shall be sealed and not unsealed until
49 the beginning of the next business day. Upon the effective date
50 of this act, the election officials shall prepare absentee paper
51 ballots and official envelopes that comply with the provisions of
52 this section.

53 (3) The Secretary of State shall promulgate rules and
54 regulations as necessary to implement the provisions of this
55 section.

56 (4) The provisions of this section shall supersede any other
57 law to the contrary.

58 (5) This section shall stand repealed on December 31, 2020.

59 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
60 and after its passage.

