

1 HB28  
2 200847-1  
3 By Representatives Jackson and Hatcher  
4 RFD: Constitution, Campaigns and Elections  
5 First Read: 04-FEB-20  
6 PFD: 01/14/2020

SYNOPSIS: Under existing law, a registered voter may only vote by absentee ballot if he or she meets one of the criteria prescribed by law for voting absentee.

This bill would allow a registered voter to vote by absentee ballot without an excuse.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to voting; to amend Sections 17-11-3 and 17-11-7, Code of Alabama 1975; to authorize absentee ballot voting without an excuse.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Sections 17-11-3 and 17-11-7, Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

"§17-11-3.

"(a) Any qualified elector of this state may apply for and vote an absentee ballot by mail or ~~by hand delivery~~ in

1 person, as provided in Sections 17-11-5 and 17-11-9, in any  
2 primary, general, special, or municipal election, if he or she  
3 makes application in writing therefor not less than five days  
4 prior to the election in which he or she desires to vote. and  
5 ~~meets one of the following requirements:~~

6 ~~"(1) The person will be out of the county or the~~  
7 ~~state, or the municipality for municipal elections, on~~  
8 ~~election day.~~

9 ~~"(2) The person has any physical illness or~~  
10 ~~infirmity which prevents his or her attendance at the polls,~~  
11 ~~whether he or she is within or without the county on the day~~  
12 ~~of the election.~~

13 ~~"(3) The person works on a shift which has at least~~  
14 ~~10 hours which coincide with the hours the polls are open at~~  
15 ~~his or her regular polling place.~~

16 ~~"(4) The person is enrolled as a student at an~~  
17 ~~educational institution located outside the county of his or~~  
18 ~~her personal residence attendance at which prevents his or her~~  
19 ~~attendance at the polls.~~

20 ~~"(5) The person is a member of, or spouse or~~  
21 ~~dependent of a member of, the Armed Forces of the United~~  
22 ~~States or is similarly qualified to vote absentee pursuant to~~  
23 ~~the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting~~  
24 ~~Act, 42 U.S.C. 1973ff.~~

25 ~~"(6) The person has been appointed as an election~~  
26 ~~officer or named as a poll watcher at a polling place other~~  
27 ~~than his or her regular polling place.~~

1           "(b) An applicant for an absentee ballot who is a  
2 member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the  
3 Alabama National Guard, the United States Naval Reserves, the  
4 United States Air Force Reserves, and the United States Army  
5 Reserve on active duty or active duty for training or an  
6 applicant who is the spouse of any member of the armed forces  
7 or any other applicant qualified to vote absentee pursuant to  
8 the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting  
9 Act, 42 U.S.C. 1973ff, may make application for an absentee  
10 ballot by filling out the federal postcard application form,  
11 authorized and provided for under the provisions of "The  
12 Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955," Public Law 296,  
13 Chapter 656, H.R. 4048, approved August 9, 1955, 84th Congress  
14 1st Session.

15           "(c) Any registered elector who requires emergency  
16 treatment of a licensed physician within five days of an  
17 election may apply for an emergency absentee ballot for the  
18 election and may vote by returning the absentee ballot no  
19 later than noon on the day the election is held. The attendant  
20 physician shall describe and certify the circumstances as  
21 constituting an emergency on a special form designed by the  
22 Secretary of State and provided by his or her office to local  
23 absentee election managers. The special form shall be attached  
24 to the application.

25           "(d) Any registered elector whose name appears on  
26 the poll list of qualified voters may vote by an emergency  
27 absentee ballot if he or she is required by his or her

1 employer under unforeseen circumstances to be out of the  
2 county on an emergency business trip on election day. Under  
3 such circumstances, the applicant shall apply for an emergency  
4 absentee ballot at the office of the absentee election manager  
5 no later than the close of the business day one day prior to  
6 the election. The applicant shall complete and file an  
7 application form designed by the Secretary of State for  
8 emergency absentee voters. The form shall contain an affidavit  
9 which the applicant shall sign or swear acknowledging that he  
10 or she was not aware of the out-of-county business requirement  
11 prior to five days before the election. An applicant who meets  
12 the requirements of this subsection may vote by an emergency  
13 absentee ballot. After voting the ballot, the voter shall hand  
14 the ballot to the absentee election manager.

15 "(e) If the occurrence of a state of emergency as  
16 declared in this or any other state, or by the federal  
17 government, renders substantial compliance with this article  
18 impossible or unreasonable for a group of qualified voters who  
19 respond to the emergency, the Secretary of State, pursuant to  
20 Section 41-22-5, may ~~promulgate~~ adopt an emergency rule to  
21 allow those qualified voters to vote by absentee ballot.  
22 Notwithstanding any other laws to the contrary, all expenses  
23 and costs incurred by the state or any county in carrying out  
24 the responsibilities and duties included in an emergency rule  
25 ~~promulgated~~ adopted pursuant to this subsection shall be paid  
26 by the State of Alabama from any funds made available for  
27 election expenses under state and federal law.

1           "(f) Notwithstanding any other provision of  
2 otherwise applicable law, in the event more than one absentee  
3 ballot is cast in the name of the single voter, whether any  
4 such multiple ballot is cast by mail or otherwise, none of the  
5 affidavit envelopes containing the multiple ballots shall be  
6 opened, and none of the multiple ballots shall be counted,  
7 except in the event of an election contest, upon the order of  
8 the election contest tribunal. Upon the conclusion of an  
9 election contest or, in the event no such contest is filed,  
10 upon the expiration of time for filing such a contest, the  
11 multiple ballots shall be provided to the district attorney,  
12 with photocopies provided to the state Attorney General, for  
13 such investigation, prosecution, or other action as may be  
14 appropriate under applicable law.

15           "§17-11-7.

16           (a) Each absentee ballot shall be accompanied by an  
17 envelope upon which shall be printed an affidavit.

18           (b) With respect to an absentee ballot cast pursuant  
19 to Section 17-11-3, the affidavit shall read as follows:

20           "State of Alabama

21           County of \_\_\_\_\_

22           I, the undersigned, do swear (or affirm) that:

23           (1) I am a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ County in the  
24 State of Alabama.

25           (2) My place of residence in Alabama is: \_\_\_\_\_

1 (street)  
2 \_\_\_\_\_, Alabama \_\_\_\_\_  
3 (city or town) (zip code)

4 (3) My voting precinct (or place where I vote)  
5 is: \_\_\_\_\_  
6 \_\_\_\_\_  
7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 (4) My date of birth is: \_\_\_\_\_  
9 month day year

10  
11 ~~(5) I am entitled to vote an absentee ballot~~  
12 ~~because:~~  
13 ~~"Check only one:~~  
14 ~~\_\_\_\_ I will be out of the county or the state on~~  
15 ~~election day.~~  
16 ~~\_\_\_\_ I am physically incapacitated and will not be~~  
17 ~~able to vote in person on election day.~~  
18 ~~\_\_\_\_ I work a required workplace shift which has at~~  
19 ~~least 10 hours which coincide with the polling hours at my~~  
20 ~~regular polling place.~~  
21 ~~\_\_\_\_ I am a student at an educational institution~~  
22 ~~located outside the county of my permanent residence and am~~

1 ~~therefore unable to vote at my usual polling place on election~~  
2 ~~day.~~

3 ~~\_\_\_\_\_ I am a member of or a spouse or dependent of a~~  
4 ~~member of the Armed Forces of the United States or am~~  
5 ~~otherwise entitled to vote pursuant to the federal Uniformed~~  
6 ~~and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, 42 U.S.C. 1973ff.~~

7 ~~\_\_\_\_\_ I have been appointed as an election officer at~~  
8 ~~a polling place which is not my regular polling place.~~

9 ~~\_\_\_\_\_ I will be out of the county on election day~~  
10 ~~responding to a state of emergency as declared by this state~~  
11 ~~or any other state, or by the federal government.~~

12 I further swear (or affirm) that I have not voted  
13 nor will I vote in person in the election to which this ballot  
14 pertains.

15 I have marked the enclosed absentee ballot  
16 voluntarily and I have read or had read to me and understand  
17 the instructions accompanying this ballot and I have carefully  
18 complied with such instructions.

19 Moreover, I further swear (or affirm) that all of  
20 the information given above is true and correct to the best of  
21 my knowledge and that I understand that by knowingly giving  
22 false information so as to vote illegally by absentee ballot  
23 that I shall be guilty of a misdemeanor which is punishable by  
24 a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or confine-  
25 ment in the county jail for not more than six months, or both.



\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature or mark of voter.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name of voter.)

IF YOUR AFFIDAVIT IS NOT SIGNED (OR MARKED), AND IF  
YOUR AFFIDAVIT IS NOT WITNESSED BY TWO WITNESSES 18 YEARS OF  
AGE OR OLDER OR A NOTARY PUBLIC OR OTHER OFFICER AUTHORIZED TO  
ACKNOWLEDGE OATHS, PRIOR TO BEING DELIVERED OR MAILED TO THE  
ABSENTEE ELECTION MANAGER, YOUR BALLOT WILL NOT BE COUNTED.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2\_\_.

I certify that the affiant is known (or made known)  
to me to be the identical party he or she claims to be.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of official)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title of official)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address of official)

OR

1st Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_

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1                                     Print name
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3 Address

5 City Zip Code

6                    2nd Witness

7 Signature

9 Print name

10

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11

Address

13 City Zip Code"

14           Section 2. This act shall become effective on the  
15       first day of the third month following its passage and  
16       approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.