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Bill Analysis

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SUMMARY

Transferring voter registrations when electors move

- Requires the election officials, when an elector moves from one county to another within Ohio and updates the elector's registration, to transfer the elector's registration and carry over the elector's voting history and other information, instead of canceling the old registration and creating a new one.
- Requires the board of elections of the elector's old county to retain copies of the elector's information permanently, instead of for at least two years.
- Eliminates a requirement that an elector sign a separate authorization in order to have the elector's previous registration transferred or canceled.
- Adds language to the applicant's affirmation on Ohio's voter registration forms, stating that "I understand that if I am registered to vote at any other address, the election officials will be notified of my change of address."
- Requires the form to include an optional field where the applicant can provide one or more former residence addresses, if the applicant is currently registered to vote at another address.

Voter registration form changes

- Adds references in law to language that is required to be included on each state's voter registration forms under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

Retention of canceled voter registration records

- Requires the Statewide Voter Registration Database to include a system for retaining canceled voter registration records permanently, instead of for a minimum of five years.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Transferring voter registrations when electors move

When an elector moves from one county to another within Ohio and updates the elector's registration, the bill requires the election officials to transfer the elector's registration between counties and to carry over the elector's voting history and other information. Currently, the Revised Code specifies instead that the election officials must cancel the old registration and create a new one.

The current law dates back to an era when each county kept paper voter registration records that never left the county. Today, the boards of elections use a combination of paper and digital records, and they periodically submit their registration data electronically to the Secretary of State for inclusion in the Statewide Voter Registration Database (SWVRD). In 2023, the General Assembly passed legislation that updated Ohio's SWVRD procedures to require an elector's state-level electronic registration record to follow the elector from county to county. The bill similarly changes Ohio's county-level process for updating registrations to facilitate the transfer of registration data between counties.¹

Current process – cancelation and re-registration

The current Revised Code states that an elector who moves and updates the elector's registration must declare that fact when updating the registration and must sign a separate authorization to cancel the elector's previous registration. The Secretary of State prescribes a form for an elector to request to cancel a registration, but Ohio's voter registration form does not mention the requirement to sign a separate cancelation authorization.² It appears that electors typically do not submit any separate authorization when they update their registrations.

Existing law then requires the board of elections of the elector's new county to mail the authorization and a copy of the elector's new registration form to the elector's previous county or state of residence. If the elector moves from one county to another within Ohio, the law requires the board of elections of the elector's old county to cancel the elector's old registration and retain it, along with the authorization, in a separate file for two calendar years, and to notify the elector of the cancelation. If the elector moves to Ohio from another state, the board must mail the authorization and a copy of the new registration form to the appropriate agency of the elector's former state and county. The cancelation of the elector's registration in that other state then occurs according to that state's laws.³

¹ R.C. 3503.15(C)(9), as amended by H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly.

² Ohio Secretary of State, [Form 10-A \(PDF\)](#) and [Form SEC 4010 \(PDF\)](#), available at ohiosos.gov under "Elections & Voting," "Elections Officials," and "Forms & Petitions."

³ R.C. 3503.33.

Transferring registrations under the bill

Under the bill, an elector is permitted, but no longer required, to sign a separate authorization in order to have the elector's previous registration transferred to the elector's new county or to have the elector's registration in another state canceled. If the elector does not sign a separate authorization, the elector's new registration form authorizes the transfer. In the case of an elector who moves into Ohio from another state, the registration form is considered to authorize the cancellation of the elector's registration in the elector's previous state.

Accordingly, the bill adds language to the applicant's affirmation on Ohio's voter registration forms, stating that "I understand that if I am registered to vote at any other address, the election officials will be notified of my change of address." The bill also requires the form to include a field for the applicant to provide one or more former residence addresses, if the applicant currently is registered to vote at another address. An applicant may, but is not required to, provide a former address. Ohio's current paper voter registration form includes this field, but the statute does not require it. (See "**Voter registration form changes**," below.)

When an elector moves from one county to another, the bill requires the board of elections of the elector's new county to *transmit*, instead of mailing, a copy of the new registration form and any accompanying authorization form to the board of elections of the elector's former county. The board in the elector's former county must remove the elector's old registration from its files and transfer the information in it to the elector's new county according to procedures prescribed by the Secretary of State. Then, the board must store the old and new registration, along with any authorization form, in a separate file and retain it permanently, instead of for only two years as under current law.

When an elector moves to Ohio from another state, the bill requires the board of elections of the elector's new county to transmit a copy of the elector's new registration form and any accompanying authorization to the chief election official of the state in which the elector previously registered.⁴

Voter registration form changes

As is discussed above, the bill adds an optional space for a former address on Ohio's paper and online voter registration forms and adds language that the applicant understands that the election officials will be notified of an address update.

The bill also adds language that is required to be included on each state's voter registration forms under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993: (1) a list of the eligibility requirements to vote, (2) a declaration under penalty of election falsification (perjury) that the applicant meets those requirements, and (3) the penalty for submitting a false registration.

⁴ R.C. 3503.14, 3503.20, and 3503.33 and conforming changes in R.C. 3503.21.

Ohio's current forms include this language as prescribed by the Secretary of State, but the Revised Code does not explicitly require it to be included.⁵

The following table compares the current form used in Ohio with the form as it would exist under the bill, assuming that the Secretary of State made no further changes.

- Language in black text is currently required under the Revised Code.
- Language in green text is currently added by the Secretary of State. Underlined green text is required by federal law.
- Language in blue text is added by the bill. Underlined blue text is required by federal law.

Current form	Form under the bill
<p>Are you a U.S. citizen?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Will you be at least 18 years of age on or before the next general election?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If you answered NO to either of the questions, do not complete this form.</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Additional mailing address (if necessary): _____</p> <p>Birthdate: _____</p> <p>Ohio driver's license or state ID card number OR last four digits of Social Security number: _____</p> <p>Phone number (voluntary): _____</p> <p>Previous address if updating current registration: _____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p>	<p>Are you a U.S. citizen?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Will you be at least 18 years of age on or before the next general election?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If you answered NO to either of the questions, do not complete this form.</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Additional mailing address (if necessary): _____</p> <p>Birthdate: _____</p> <p>Ohio driver's license or state ID card number OR last four digits of Social Security number: _____</p> <p>Phone number (voluntary): _____</p> <p><u>Previous address if updating current registration:</u> _____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p>

⁵ R.C. 3503.14 and 3503.20; 52 United States Code 20505(a)(2), 20507(a)(5), and 20508(b)(2); and Ohio Secretary of State, [Form SEC 4010 \(PDF\)](#).

Current form	Form under the bill
<p>Current date: _____</p> <p><u>I declare under penalty of election falsification that I am a citizen of the United States, will have lived in this state for 30 days immediately preceding the next election, and will be at least 18 years of age at the time of the general election.</u></p> <p><u>WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A FELONY OF THE FIFTH DEGREE</u></p>	<p>Current date: _____</p> <p><u>I declare under penalty of election falsification that I am a citizen of the United States, will have lived in this state for 30 days immediately preceding the next election, and will be at least 18 years of age at the time of the general election. I understand that if I am registered to vote at any other address, the election officials will be notified of my change of address.</u></p> <p><u>WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A FELONY OF THE FIFTH DEGREE</u></p>

Retention of canceled voter registration records

Finally, the bill requires the SWVRD to include a system for retaining canceled voter registration records permanently, instead of for a minimum of five years.⁶

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	03-27-24

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⁶ R.C. 3503.15(B)(6).