HISTORY OF SB1518

The SB1518 Problem and Proposed Solution…

Problem: The 45,000 Early ballots dropped off on Election Day at polling centers NEVER WENT THROUGH SIGNATURE VERIFICATION!

Solution: Require ALL Early ballots go through Signature Verification either at polling centers, or at MCTEC like mailed-in Early ballots.

SB1518 History – where we're at and how we got here…

The short history of SB1518: As introduced on February 1, the Bill (see link on last page) was quickly passed through the Senate Elections Committee with a Due Pass vote of 5-3 along party lines. Understand that this Bill was only referencing Early Ballots coming into a polling location on Election Day.

It then advanced through Senate Rules Committee with a pass vote on 2/20/23; this moved along for a 2nd Read in the Senate on 2/20/23; Consent Calendar on 2/20/23; and finally, the Senate Caucus, Republican and Democrat on 2/21/23.

On 3/21/23, SB1518 was sent to the Senate Committee of the Whole (COW) where it was retained, and then revisited on 3/22/23 in Senate COW #2 where an Amendment was introduced and adopted, passing the Bill out of COW. From here the Bill would go to the 3rd Read in the Senate and be transmitted to the House.

That Floor Amendment required Early ballots returned to a voting location on election day after confirming voter identification, be removed from the voting location by two authorized election workers to complete a chain of custody log and then deliver the ballots to a designated receiving site at an official elections facility This passed with no questions by a vote of 29-0 and 1 person not voting, transferring SB1518 to the House.

At the House, the Bill once again moved through Committees Municipal Oversight & Elections (MOE) and Rules, then landing in the House COW for debate. On COW #2, Rep Kolodin amended the Bill on 4/26/23 to add the following (link to the Amendment on the last page):

• Instructs the election official at the polling location after an elector's identification is verified, to stamp the envelope with a stamp that reads "ID Verified", and to place the early ballot in a "secured drop box" specifically for verified early ballots, and

• Specifies that any completed early ballot affidavit that is not stamped "ID Verified", but is in the secured ballot box designated for verified early ballots, must go through the regular signature verification process.

The Bill as amended passed on 5/15/23, by a vote of 37-21, and went back to the Senate on 5/16/23. On 6/12/23, the Republican Caucus recommended a Conference Committee procedure…on 6/13/23 the Senate passed SB1518. Upon sending the Bill to the House for a Final vote, the Bill failed that same day, in part because it appears the Kolodin Amendment had been removed.

Some election integrity proponents thought this Amendment was added to remove a "loophole" allowing counties to accept early ballots without actually verifying the signatures. In fact, this loophole already existed, and by adding the 2nd Amendment, requiring election officials to stamp "ID verified" on early ballots that are accepted after providing identification through signature verification, and placing them in a separate secured ballot box, instead of commingling with ballots not having the stamp, would close the loophole!

Further, with the addition of the ID stamp through the 2nd Amendment, the process of counting votes would save time, and the process would have been more secure and transparent.

However, some opposed the Amendment, concerned that the counties would still find ways to circumvent it, not necessarily stopping ballot harvesting, and allowing, as was done in 2022, over 44,799 Early ballots that were submitted on Election Day to go through without signature verification. (Maybe this is why there were so many "fraudulent ballots" this past election…)

Presently, there is an impasse on how to push this needed Bill through the Legislature in a time-efficient and secured fashion, that resolves the issue of ID at the polls. The Bill is presently sitting in the House awaiting a new version that will not be seen until July 31 when the Legislature meets again.

Below are links to review the Introduced version of the Bill, Amendments and the final AS IS or present version that is being debated.

1. **Introduced version of SB1518**
   https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/56leg/1R/bills/SB1518P.pdf
2. **Present House Fact or Summary Sheet of SB1518**:
   https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/56leg/1R/summary/H.SB1518_061223_CONFERENCEENGROSSED.pdf
3. **First Amendment to SB1518**:
   https://apps.azleg.gov/BillStatus/GetCalendarBillAmendmentPdf/?calendarBillId=747753&itemId=0
4. **Second Amendment to SB1518 (in question):**
   https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/56leg/1R/adopted/H.1518FloorKOLODIN_Merged2.pdf
5. **Present copy of SB1518:** https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/56leg/1R/bills/SB1518C.pdf