HLS 16RS-797 ORIGINAL

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 877

BY REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER

VOTERS/VOTING: Provides relative to early voting

1	AN ACT
2	To amend and reenact R.S. 18:1309(A)(1), (B)(1), (C), and (M) and to enact R.S.
3	18:1309(N), relative to early voting; to expand the time during which the registrar
4	must remain open to allow for early voting during the early voting period; to repeal
5	provisions allowing the registrar to determine the time during which early voting
6	takes place at certain locations; to require the registrar to advertise the days, hours,
7	and locations where early voting will be conducted in the parish; and to provide for
8	related matters.
9	Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:
10	Section 1. R.S. 18:1309(A)(1), (B)(1), (C), and (M) are hereby amended and
11	reenacted and R.S. 18:1309(N) is hereby enacted to read as follows:
12	§1309. Early voting; verification
13	A.(1) The period for conducting early voting shall be from include the
14	following:
15	(a) The third Saturday prior to any scheduled election.
16	(b) The period fourteen days to seven days prior to any scheduled election.
17	* * *
18	B.(1) For the purpose of facilitating early voting, the registrar may designate,
19	in addition to the location for early voting provided in Subsection A of this Section,
20	one branch office wherein early voting may be conducted. Any such branch office

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CODING: Words in struck through type are deletions from existing law; words <u>underscored</u> are additions.

shall be located in a public building, and the hours during which early voting may be conducted therein shall be fixed by the registrar as provided in Subsection A of this Section. However, if a branch office of a registrar is destroyed, inaccessible, or unsafe during or following a gubernatorially declared state of emergency, the registrar may utilize a temporary building as a branch office to discharge his duties until an office that meets the requirements of this Section becomes available. Such temporary office shall be located within the parish, or if there is no appropriate location within the parish due to the emergency, then in an immediately adjacent parish, or if there is no appropriate location in any immediately adjacent parish due to the emergency, then in the nearest parish in which there is an appropriate location.

\* \* \*

C. In parishes which extend in one direction more than fifty miles and which are interspersed with navigable waters, the registrar may designate, in addition to the locations for early voting provided for in Subsections A and B of this Section, one additional branch office wherein early voting may be conducted. Any such branch office shall be located in a public building and the hours during which early voting may be conducted therein shall be fixed by the registrar as provided in Subsection A of this Section.

19 \* \* \*

M.(1)(a) In a parish where early voting is conducted at an additional location pursuant to R.S. 18:1309.2, the registrar may fix the hours and days during which early voting shall be conducted at the additional location during the early voting period if such hours and days of voting are approved by the secretary of state no later than twenty-five days prior to the election shall be as provided in Subsection A of this Section.

(b) The registrar shall ensure that adequate notice is posted at the office of the registrar informing the public of the hours and days during which early voting will be conducted at the additional location, and the secretary of state shall post such notice on the secretary of state's website.

1 (2) The provisions of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection shall not apply to 2 early voting for gubernatorial or congressional elections. 3 4 N. The registrar shall take all reasonable steps prior to an election to make as many people in the parish as possible aware of the days, hours, and locations for 5 6 early voting in the parish, including without limitation by issuing press releases to 7 local news services and other media outlets and, if the registrar has a website, by 8 posting notice on the registrar's website. At a minimum, the registrar shall publish 9 notice of the days, hours, and locations for early voting in the parish at least once a 10 week for two consecutive weeks in the official journal of the parish and in another 11 newspaper with a larger circulation within the parish than the official journal if there 12 is such a newspaper. Such publication shall be completed no later than thirty days 13 prior to the election. 14 15 Section 2. In an effort to increase voter turnout and maximize opportunities to vote, 16 the secretary of state shall take all measures to ensure that early voting is available to voters 17 for at least seven full days.

## DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 877 Original

2016 Regular Session

Hunter

**Abstract:** Adds the third Sat. prior to the election to the early voting period and repeals provisions allowing the registrar to determine the time during which early voting takes place at certain locations.

<u>Present law</u> (R.S. 18:1309) provides that the early voting period for an election is the period from 14 days to seven days prior to the election. Requires the office of the registrar to be open from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mon. through Sat. on each day that the registrar is required to be open during the early voting period. Provides that early voting on each day of the early voting period terminates when all persons who were in line to vote at the close of the regular office hours of the registrar's office have been allowed to vote.

<u>Proposed law</u> adds the third Sat. prior to an election to the early voting period. Otherwise retains <u>present law</u>.

<u>Proposed law</u> requires the registrar to take all reasonable steps prior to an election to make as many people in the parish as possible aware of the days, hours, and locations for early voting in the parish, including without limitation by issuing press releases to local news services and other media outlets and, if the registrar has a website, by posting notice on the registrar's website. Provides that at a minimum, the registrar shall publish notice of the days, hours, and locations for early voting in the parish at least once a week for two consecutive weeks in the official journal of the parish and in another newspaper with a larger circulation within the parish than the official journal if there is such a newspaper. Provides that such publication shall be completed no later than thirty days prior to the election.

<u>Present law</u> authorizes the registrar to designate one branch office, in addition to the office of the registrar, in a public building where early voting may also be conducted. Authorizes the registrar to designate an additional branch office for early voting in a parish that extends in one direction more than 50 miles and that is interspersed with navigable waters.

<u>Present law</u> (R.S. 18:1309.2) authorizes the secretary of state to develop and implement a program for the conduct of early voting at additional locations within any parish of the state.

Proposed law retains present law.

<u>Present law</u> authorizes the registrar to fix the hours during which early voting is to be conducted at branch offices and additional locations under certain circumstances. <u>Proposed law</u> repeals <u>present law</u> and provides that the hours and days during which early voting is conducted at branch offices and additional locations is as provided in <u>present law</u> for the office of the registrar.

(Amends R.S. 18:1309(A)(1), (B)(1), (C), and (M); Adds R.S. 18:1309(N))