SENATE BILL 325:
The Uniform & Expanded Early Voting Act.

Committee:	House Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	**Date:**	June 14, 2018
Introduced by:	Sens. Tillman, Brock, Tucker	**Prepared by:**	Jessica Sammons
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition S325-CSTC-64		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: Senate Bill 325 would amend the time period for early voting, establish hours for one-stop sites to be open during the early voting period, and require the county board of elections to submit an annual report on voter list maintenance efforts.

CURRENT LAW: Generally, early voting is a term used to describe in-person absentee voting at "one stop" voting sites. Currently, any qualified voter of the State may vote by absentee ballot in a statewide primary, general, or special election and any qualified voter of a county is authorized to vote by absentee ballot in any primary or election conducted by the county board of elections (CBOE).

Absentee voting may take place at a "one-stop" voting site run by a county board of elections, either at the county board's office or another site approved by the CBOE. Sites must be staffed by a member or a full-time employee of a CBOE. Sites must be approved by the State Board.

The period for early voting begins on the third Thursday before an election and runs through 1:00 p.m. on the last Saturday before an election at the CBOE. A CBOE may extend the hours from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the last Saturday before an election. A CBOE can vary hours by sites and by day of the week, provided that the plan is approved by the CBOE and by the State Board.

The CBOE is required to calculate the cumulative number of scheduled voting hours at all one-stop sites during the 2012 primary and general elections, respectively, and provide at least the same number of hours offered in 2012 for one-stop voting in future elections which include a presidential candidate on the ballot through a combination of hours and numbers of one stop sites during the primary or general election. The CBOE must make the same calculation for the 2010 primary and general election and provide the same minimum number of hours as in that election at one-stop sites for elections not including a presidential election on the ballot.

By unanimous vote, a CBOE with all members present and voting may submit a request to the State Board to reduce the number of hours established by the 2010 and 2012 calculations. The reduction would take effect only if approved by unanimous vote of the State Board with all members present and voting.

BILL ANALYSIS: Senate Bill 325 would do the following:

➢ Amend the time period for early voting. Early voting would begin no earlier than the third Wednesday before an election, and would end no later than 7:00 p.m. on the last Friday before the election. For the 2018 general election, these dates would be October 17 through November 2.

➢ Require that each one-stop voting site across the county be open at that same location throughout the early voting period.

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➢ Require that on each day that the voting sites are open, they are open uniformly throughout the county.

➢ Establish hours for one-stop voting sites to be open as follows:

- o Monday through Friday – 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

- o Saturday and Sunday – County board of elections would be able to set hours for early voting on these days. If a county board of elections opens a one-stop voting site on Saturdays or Sundays during the early voting period, then all sites would be required to open for the same hours uniformly throughout the county on Saturdays or Sundays, respectively.

➢ Require annual reporting of voter list maintenance efforts. County boards of elections would be required to submit an annual report to the State Board by September 1 of each year on voter list maintenance. The State Board would be required to submit these annual reports to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee by October 1 of each year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective when it becomes law.