



SB 1132

Sponsor: Ben Brown

Path to full text: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/26info/pdf-bill/intro/SB1132.pdf>

PART 1 — Quick Snapshot (plain-language)

SB 1132 is designed to move Missouri elections away from electronic voting systems and toward **paper ballots counted by hand**, while still requiring a limited number of **accessible voting machines** for voters who qualify under federal accessibility standards. The bill does this by **repealing a large block of current statutes tied to electronic voting machines/tabulation** and **replacing them with a new statutory framework built around hand counting procedures**. The bill is long (66 pages) primarily because it's **swapping out an entire system**, not because it's adding unrelated policy “barnacles.” The tradeoff is that it also centralizes some authority in the **Secretary of State**—especially around a list/database of voters eligible to use accessible machines—which we think needs guardrails. Overall, this bill advances election transparency and public confidence enough that we recommend **supporting** it, while pushing amendments to prevent future misuse and to keep sensitive voter data closer to the counties.

1.2 Triage Table (Fast Flags)

Check	Finding
Single-subject / clear title	Borderline but probably upheld. The title is generic and doesn't clearly alert citizens to a major pivot to hand counting.
Title Specificity (0–3)	1/3 (generic) — “relating to the conduct of elections.”
Department scope	Mostly Elections/SOS/Local election authorities (related), but SOS authority + database piece is a “watch item.”
Does it grow government?	Good/Slight Concern: reduces reliance on machines/vendors but adds an SOS-administered list of power and compliance structures.
Impact on Missouri families	Helps: higher trust elections; potential cost neutrality or savings are plausible with exemplary implementation.

Check	Finding
Initial stance	Support

PART 2 — Purpose & Provision Map

2.1 Stated purpose vs. real-world purpose

The bill’s practical purpose is to **replace Missouri’s machine- and tabulator-oriented election statutes with a hand-counting system while preserving accessible voting for eligible voters.**

2.2 Provision Map (clustered, with tags)

A) “Removed vs. Added” (Why it’s 66 pages)

What is removed:

- The bill **repeals 16 entire statutory sections** (a big chunk of “electronic voting system” law).
- It also deletes large blocks of language inside other sections that currently assume or regulate **electronic voting systems and automatic tabulating equipment** (for example, existing SOS approval language tied to voting devices/tabulators is struck).

What is added/replaced:

- It **rewrites 27 sections** (“enacted in lieu of...”) and creates **6 brand-new sections**, mainly to implement **hand counting procedures** and conform the rest of election law to that shift.

Bottom line on the size:

A 66-page bill is typically a red flag for Act for Missouri—but here, the length largely reflects the mechanical process of removing **an entire election method and replacing it with a different one** across many cross-referenced statutes. That’s qualitatively different than a 66-page bill that’s an omnibus of unrelated policies.

B) Paper ballots + hand-marking as the default (Good)

- The bill states the “official ballot” shall be **printed on paper** and marked by the voter (or a person assisting the voter).
- It also builds in hand-count operational rules (e.g., handling voters, ballots, and precinct processes) consistent with a paper/hand-count model.

Tag: [Good] — This is the core integrity upgrade.

C) Accessible voting machines (Mixed)

The bill requires election authorities to provide accessible voting machines that meet federal accessibility requirements and ties machine use to a qualifying list.

- It requires election authorities to provide a “sufficient number” of **accessible voting machines** meeting HAVA requirements and producing a paper ballot.
- It limits machine use at the polling place to the case of machines authorized under the accessibility section.

Tag: [Mixed] — Accessibility itself is legitimate and necessary, but the *control structure* matters (see *SOS/database concerns below*).

D) Secretary of State list/database power (Concern)

SB 1132’s accessibility section includes a statewide list concept:

- The Secretary of State maintains and provides election authorities a list of voters eligible to use accessible voting machines.

Tag: [Concern] — This is the area where we like to see additional guardrails and/or a redesign to keep power local and prevent political misuse.

E) Effective date (Good clarity, but means the change is not immediate)

- The act becomes effective **January 1, 2027**.

Tag: [Good] — Clean implementation date and probably the earliest possible starting date (but it means 2026 elections are still under the old world).

PART 3 — Constitutional & Process Checks

3.1 Single-subject & clear-title (Art. III §23)

- **Main subject:** election conduct/voting and counting method.
- **Additional subjects:** accessibility compliance + SOS list/database administration.

Our view: **borderline, but likely upheld as a single-subject matter** because accessibility voting is arguably part of election administration. But the **title is generic** and fails the “citizen fair-notice” test that Act for Missouri cares about—an ordinary citizen reading “conduct of elections” would not necessarily expect “Missouri moves to hand counting + removes most machine tabulation framework.”

Requested improvement: strengthen the title to provide fair notice (see the amendments section).

3.2 Rights, due process, and equal treatment

- No obvious impacts on speech, guns, etc.
- **Due process/abuse risk:** centralized eligibility list for machine use could be abused if eligibility standards are vague or if there's no appeal path.

3.3 Delegation & separation of powers

Act for Missouri flags **open-ended power** and centralization.

SB 1132's big "delegation risk" is not that it creates a brand-new agency—it's that it **positions the SOS as gatekeeper over who gets to use an accessible machine**, which can be politicized if not tightly bound.

PART 4 — Impact on Missouri Families

4.1 Cost & administration (Mixed-to-Positive)

- Groups like Cause for America argue that hand counting can be done for **the same or less** than machine-based elections (or at least far less than worst-case claims), using staffing models and estimator tools.
- They also provide tested timing ranges (example: "Missouri Method" finding of roughly **50–100 ballots per hour per counting team**, depending on ballot length).

Even if hand counting costs *slightly more* in some counties, we believe **public confidence in elections is worth paying for**, and Missouri can choose to prioritize it.

4.2 Civic capacity idea: Election Day as a state holiday (Support as a companion concept)

The People's Lobby of Missouri proposes an election holiday and paying people adequately so that counting isn't reliant on exhausted volunteers.

We see this as a **companion bill** idea (not necessarily something to cram into SB 1132), but it's strategically aligned with making hand counting sustainable.

PART 5 — Act for Missouri Core Principles Check

- **Constitutionalism & rule of law:** Stronger election transparency and reduced reliance on opaque vendor systems are a net positive.
- **Limited government / local control:** Good—better in the sense of removing vendor dependency.

- **Surveillance/data concern:** Creating or expanding statewide databases should be minimized and tightly governed.
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PART 6 — Special Topic Tests

Surveillance State & Data-Control Test (Concern area)

A statewide list of voters eligible for accessible voting machines can become a sensitive dataset (disability/accommodation status). Even if well-intended, it's the kind of infrastructure that can be repurposed later.

This is why we prefer: **county-held eligibility records**, with SOS limited to auditing and technical guidance—not owning the master list.

PART 7 — Red Flags, Fixes, and Final Recommendation

7.1 Red Flags (prioritized)

1. **Generic title / fair-notice problem**
The title is broad (“conduct of elections”), but the bill is a major system swap.
 2. **SOS gatekeeper power + statewide list/database risk**
The eligibility list for accessible machine use runs through SOS. This can be improved with guardrails and/or localization.
 3. **Bundling concern (accessibility/SOS structure inside the big hand-count bill)**
This part is a gray area and would be cleaner as separate legislation *or* at least tightly constrained inside this bill.
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7.2 Concrete Amendment Ideas (what we'd like to see)

If we were marking up SB 1132, we'd push amendments like:

A) Title fix (fair notice)

- Change title to something like: *“relating to paper ballots and hand counting, and limiting voting machine use to accessibility voting”*.

B) Localize the accessible-machine eligibility list

- Default: **each county election authority maintains the list**, with standardized criteria and forms.
- SOS role: publish uniform rules + audit compliance, not control day-to-day eligibility.

C) Guardrails against political misuse

- Require **objective, narrow eligibility criteria** (tied strictly to accessibility needs).
- Require a **written determination**, retention limits, and an **appeal process**.
- Prohibit using the list for anything beyond providing/accessing an accessible ballot-marking method.

D) Data minimization

- Only collect what is strictly necessary to provide the accommodation; restrict sharing; require secure storage; purge on a schedule.

E) Companion concept (separate bill strongly preferred): Election Day state holiday

- This would expand the pool of available counters and normalize “civic duty” participation.

Final Recommendation

Act for Missouri SUPPORTS SB 1132 because it is essentially a structural replacement that **removes Missouri’s statutory dependence on electronic voting/tabulation frameworks and replaces it with paper-ballot, hand-counting procedures**, effective January 1, 2027.

At the same time, we recommend **targeted amendments** to:

- prevent SOS political misuse,
- keep sensitive accessibility eligibility records **at the county level by default**, and
- strengthen the bill title for citizen fair notice.