
**State Government & Tribal
Affairs Committee**

HB 3159

Brief Description: Improving voter registration integrity.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Roach, Dunn, Bailey and McCune.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires person registering to vote must provide his or her full legal name on the application.
- Requires voter registration applications contain a check box that allows the applicant to indicate whether he or she has ever been convicted of a felony.
- Requires a summoning court to notify the county auditor and the Secretary of State (Secretary) if a potential juror is not 18 years of age, is not a U.S. citizen, does not live in the county, or has been convicted of a felony.
- Requires the Secretary to audit county registration records to ensure cancellations are made for voters convicted of a felony and for deceased voters.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Requirements for Voter Registration

Certain information is required to be included on an application for voter registration. The applicant must provide his or her name, residential address, date of birth, and a driver's license or identification card number, or the last four digits of a Social Security number if he or she does not have a driver's license or identification card. In addition, the applicant must indicate by checking a

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box that he or she is a citizen of the United States and must sign the application attesting to the truth of the information provided.

The Help America Vote Act stipulates that if an applicant does not have a driver's license, identification card, or a Social Security number, a unique "identifier" must be assigned and the person must be registered to vote.

A person who registers to vote by mail and does not have a driver's license, identification card, or a Social Security number must provide a form of identification on or before the first time he or she votes. If the identification is not provided, the ballot will be treated as a provisional ballot and will only be counted if the voter's signature on the outside envelope matches the signature in the voter registration records.

Voter Registration Database

The Secretary of State (Secretary) is required to conduct a quarterly review to update records of all registered voters on the statewide voter registration database to make additions and corrections. The quarterly review includes a comparison of lists maintained by the Department of Corrections, the Washington State Patrol, and the Office of the Administrator of the Courts. Periodically, the Secretary must remove the names of deceased voters from the database based on information prepared by the registrar of vital statistics.

Voter Registration Drives

A person or organization that collects voter registration applications must transmit the forms to the Secretary or a county auditor at least weekly.

Verification of Mail Ballot Signatures

The county auditor must notify a voter by first-class mail in the event that the voter fails to sign the outside envelope of the absentee or provisional ballot, or if the voter's signature does not match the signature on file in the voter's registration record. To correct a missing signature, the voter must: (1) appear in person and sign the envelope, or (2) sign and return a copy of the envelope provided by the county auditor.

If the signature on the ballot envelope does not match the signature on file, the voter must: (1) appear in person and sign a new registration form or (2) return a signed affidavit provided by the county auditor. The voter has the option to enclose with the affidavit a photocopy of a valid government or tribal issued identification document that includes the voter's current signature.

If the signature on the copy of the affidavit does not match the signature on file or the signature on the copy of the identification document, the voter is required to appear in person and sign a new voter registration form before certification of the election in order for the ballot to be counted.

Summary of Bill:

Requirements for Voter Registration

A person registering to vote must provide his or her full legal name on the application. The application must include a check box that allows the applicant to indicate whether he or she has ever been convicted of a felony. If the applicant indicates that he or she has been convicted of a felony, the applicant must provide proof that his or her voting rights have been restored.

Voter Registration Database

Upon learning that a potential juror is not a United States citizen, is not 18 years of age, does not live in the county where summoned to serve, or has been convicted of a felony, the summoning court must notify the county auditor and the Secretary. The Secretary and county auditor must verify the reason for ineligibility and take the appropriate action to cancel or transfer the registration.

Once each year, the Secretary shall conduct an audit by making a comparison of information the Secretary receives regarding felony convictions and deceased voters and checking it against county registration records to ensure that the proper cancellations have been made.

Voter Registration Drives

A person or organization that collects voter registration applications must transmit the forms to the Secretary or a county auditor within five days rather than weekly.

Verification of Mail Ballot Signatures

The same provisions for correcting a missing signature are applied to include persons who sign the oath with a mark and fail to have two witnesses attest to the signature.

Clarification is made that when a voter cures a mismatched signature by appearing in person and signing a new registration record, the new registration form becomes the official record for the current and future elections.

Provisions for curing a mismatched signature by signing and returning an affidavit are as follows:

- The voter must provide a photocopy of the allowed identification documents. In order for the vote to be counted, the signature on the affidavit, the ballot envelope, and the identification must match.
- The voter may sign a copy of the affidavit in front of two witnesses who are registered voters who can attest to the signature. The signature on the affidavit must match the signature on the ballot envelope.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2008.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.