

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1880

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to ballot envelopes.

Brief Description: Concerning ballot envelopes.

Sponsors: Representatives Armstrong, Hunt, Appleton, Alexander and Nelson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 2/17/09, 2/20/09 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/4/09, 93-2.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/3/10, 90-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/5/10, 45-3.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the requirement that mail ballot return envelopes must have a secrecy flap to conceal the voter's signature and telephone number.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Flannigan, Hurst and Miloscia.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Two envelopes are provided for returning mail ballots. The inner envelope is provided for secrecy of the ballot, and the outer return envelope contains a space for the voter to sign the oath and to include a telephone number. In 2005 the Legislature enacted a law that required

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the outer return envelope to have a "flap" that would cover the signature and optional telephone number.

Summary of Bill:

County auditors are no longer required to provide return envelopes that have a privacy flap to cover the voter's signature and optional telephone number.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

The Senate amendment adds an emergency clause and takes effect immediately and makes technical corrections to update statutory changes made in 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The purpose of this bill is to provide options to the county auditors. The envelopes with the privacy flaps are very expensive. Anyone can see the signatures of voters during the counting process. A voter has the option to drop a ballot in one of the collection boxes in order to minimize the number of people who are able to see the signature.

(With concerns) The secrecy flap was more about the privacy of the phone number. The phone number was added to the reform bill to allow county auditors to contact voters quickly if the voter did not sign the ballot. The opposition to providing a phone number was due to secrecy of the phone number and not for the purpose of providing secrecy for the signature. The phone number is optional.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Armstrong, prime sponsor.

(With concerns) Toby Nixon.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.