

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2495

As Passed House:
February 15, 2010

Title: An act relating to ballot tabulation.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions relating to the tabulation of ballots.

Sponsors: Representatives White, Roberts, Dickerson, Carlyle, Springer, Miloscia, Nelson, Simpson, Dunshee, Pedersen and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/12/10, 1/15/10 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/15/10, 95-3.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows for tabulation of ballots to commence beginning at 8:00 a.m. on the Monday before the primary or election.
- Requires tabulation results to be secret until after 8:00 p.m. on the day of the primary or election.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Hurst and Taylor.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

County auditors may begin opening and processing absentee ballots as soon as the ballots are received. Tabulation of ballots may not begin until after 8:00 p.m. on election day. Returned absentee ballots must be placed in secure storage until tabulation begins.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Tabulation of absentee ballots may begin at 8:00 a.m. on the Monday immediately before the day of the primary or election. Results must be kept secret until after 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) There were 1.8 million ballots cast in the last election, most by absentee voters. Ballots can be processed, but not tabulated, prior to election day. This bill offers another management tool to process as many ballots as possible on election day. The policy used to be to process ballots earlier, but the law was changed. The volume of ballots counted depends on the kind of counting equipment. The new equipment in King County is able to count about 20,000 ballots in about two hours. Pierce County, when ranked choice voting was taking place, was processing twice the number of ballots. Pierce County would take advantage of the bill as it would speed up its processing.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative White, prime sponsor; Sam Reed, Secretary of State; Kim Wyman, Washington Association of County Auditors; and Lori Augino, Pierce County Chief Deputy Auditor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.