

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2883

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**As Reported By House Committee On:**  
Government Operations

**Title:** An act relating to elections by mail in small precincts.

**Brief Description:** Restricting use of mail voting in small precincts of large counties.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Cairnes, Campbell, Talcott, D. Schmidt, Carrell, McMahan and Huff.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Government Operations: 1/31/96 [DPS].

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Cairnes, Vice Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Conway; R. Fisher; Hargrove; Honeyford; Hymes; Mulliken; Scheuerman; D. Schmidt and Wolfe.

**Staff:** Scott White (786-7153).

**Background:** Provisions are established relating to elections by mail in small precincts.

Existing law allows a county auditor to conduct the voting in a precinct by mail ballot for any primary or election, general or special, if that precinct has fewer than 200 active registered voters at the time of closing of voter registration.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The proposed legislation amends existing law allowing a county auditor to conduct the voting in a precinct by mail ballot for any primary or election, if that precinct has fewer than 200 active registered voters at the time of closing of voter registration and if the county has a population of less than 500,000.

In a county with a population of 500,000 or more, the auditor may conduct the voting by mail ballot in a precinct, if that precinct has fewer than 100 active registered voters.

A special election in which candidates for partisan office are to be voted upon shall not be conducted by mail ballot in any precinct with 200 or more active registered voters, or 100 or more active registered voters in a county with a population of 500,000 or more.

If a registered voter in a small precinct requests to vote at a normal polling place in a nearby precinct rather than by mailed ballot, then the county auditor shall assign the voter to vote at a normal polling place in another nearby precinct.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill allows voters in a small precinct to vote in another precinct if the auditor chooses to use only mailed ballots for their small precinct.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Several districts now use mail ballots exclusively. The bill allows people to vote in the traditional way at a polling place. It is difficult to get a ballot count when using mailed ballots.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Cairnes, prime sponsor; Representative Gigi Talcott; Robert Lauver, citizen; Blanche Lauver, citizen (reading testimony from Elaine Lewis).