

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2306

As Reported By House Committee On:
Government Administration

Title: An act relating to voter registration.

Brief Description: Determining citizenship of voter registration applicants.

Sponsors: Representatives Smith, B. Thomas, Bush and Dunn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Administration: 1/15/98, 1/30/98 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives D. Schmidt, Chairman; D. Sommers, Vice Chairman; Scott, Ranking Minority Member; Gardner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dunn; Reams; Smith; L. Thomas and Wensman.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Doumit; Dunshee and Wolfe.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

Background: Several different programs exist for persons to register to vote. Each voter registration form requires the applicant to attest that he or she is a citizen of the United States and a warning that it is a class C felony to provide false information.

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 establishes various requirements for registering persons to vote at any election where federal offices are considered. Registration by mail must be allowed. A person must be offered the opportunity to register to vote when he or she applies for a driver's license, public assistance or disability services.

Summary of Substitute Bill: (1) All newly printed voter registration forms must clearly indicate that only United States citizens may register to vote. Similar language must be stamped conspicuously onto existing voter registration forms in the possession of the Office of the Secretary of State.

(2) The state's motor voter registration law is altered to require the licensing agent to ask the following as a single question:

Are you a United States citizen and do you want to register to vote or transfer your voter registration?–

The agent must provide the applicant with a voter registration form if the applicant responds in the affirmative to this inquiry.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Requirements were deleted that registrants must indicate their citizenship when they register to vote. Language was inserted requiring voter registration forms to include language indicating that only U.S. citizens may register to vote.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: At times persons who are not U.S. citizens are given motor voter registration forms. We should ensure that only U.S. citizens are registered to vote.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Smith, prime sponsor; Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County Auditor; Ralph Munro, Secretary of State; Sherry Bockwinkel, Citizens for Leaders with Ethics and Accountability Now; and Paul Telford, Citizens for Responsible Government.