

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1509

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### As Reported By House Committee On:

State Government

**Title:** An act relating to the conduct of the presidential preference primary by mail ballot.

**Brief Description:** Permitting mail balloting for the presidential primary.

**Sponsors:** Representatives D. Schmidt, Kessler, Wolfe, Dunshee, Miloscia and Carlson; by request of Secretary of State.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/9/99, 2/24/99 [DP].

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows county auditors to conduct presidential preference primaries using mail ballots.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives McMorris, Republican Co-Chair; Romero, Democratic Co-Chair; Campbell, Republican Vice Chair; Miloscia, Democratic Vice Chair; Dunshee; Haigh; Lambert and D. Schmidt.

**Staff:** Steve Lundin (786-7127).

### Background:

A state presidential preference primary is held on the fourth Tuesday of May in the year of the presidential election. This date may be moved if certain conditions are met. Provisions are made for the Secretary of State to include on the ballot the names of candidates for each major political party who seeks nomination from that party for President of the United States.

Any voter may receive a ballot that includes all of the names of candidates for every major political party. However, a voter may subscribe to a particular party declaration and receive a separate distinguishable ballot that only includes the names of the candidates to be the nominee of that major political party for the presidency.

A major political party may base its allocation of delegates to its national nominating convention based in whole or in part upon the results of the presidential preference primary.

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**Summary of Bill:**

A county auditor may conduct voting at a presidential preference primary using mail ballots.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This reduces costs but is not mandatory. Nothing in this bill changes the ability of major political parties to determine how they use results from the presidential preference primary, if at all. Voter turn out is increased with mail ballot voting.

**Testimony Against:** This is simplistic. Late breaking information could come out after voters have cast their ballots. Presidential primaries should be conducted in the same manner in each county.

**Testified:** (Pro) Representative Dave Schmidt, prime sponsor; Tim Hill, Office of the Secretary of State, Bob Terwilliger, Auditors Association; and Sam Reed, County Auditors Association.

(Concerns) Will Baker, citizen.