

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia, Washington

## Bill Analysis

Bill No. HB 1109

Clarifying standards for tabulating  
absentee and mail ballots

Brief title

Hearing Date: 1/29/99

Reps H. Sommers and D. Schmidt

Sponsor(s)

Staff: Steve Andin

State Government Committee

Phone: 786-7127

### BACKGROUND:

Voters may vote using different procedures, including irregular ballots at polling places, absentee ballots and casting mail ballots.

A voter may obtain an absentee ballot for a single election or primary, may become a non-go home absentee voter and automatically receive an absentee ballot for all elections and primaries.

Three different vote-by-mail provisions exist:

- o The county auditor may designate a precinct with 200 or fewer active registered voters as a vote-by-mail precinct. All subsequent primary and general elections, whether held in odd-numbered or even-numbered years, are conducted using mail ballots.
- o Any local government may request that a mail ballot election be held at a special election called or requested by the county auditor. The special election is not held in conjunction with a state primary, general election and a partisan active office is not considered the primary election.
- o The county auditor, in his or her discretion, may conduct primary, any odd-numbered years using mail ballots, except where a partisan office statewide or a state ballot proposition appears on the ballot.

Mail ballots are generally handled and processed in the same manner as absentee ballots.

~~Absent ballots mailed to voters as least 20 days prior to the election primary for which they are issued. Election results certified 5 days after special election primary and 5 days after general election.~~

~~Absent ballots mailed to voters if they are postmarked on or before the day of the election or primary and received by the county auditor on or before the day election results are certified. The date the voter certifies he has the ballot used, in lieu of using the postmark date for overseas service ballots.~~

~~Federal law requires that ballots to overseas voters service have a transit time of at least 45 days, which means that the ballots be mailed to the voter 45 or more days prior to the day the ballot may be returned to the election office to be counted.~~

**SUMMARY:**

~~Various changes are made to these of absentee ballots mailed.~~

~~Absent ballots mailed to voters shall be delivered to voters who are overseas service voters as least 2, but not more than 4 days prior to the primary election for which they are issued, rather than at least 20 days prior to the date of the election primary for which they are issued.~~

~~Requirements established by statute for absentee ballots mailed. Absent ballots mailed by expedited efforts shall be made to tabulate absentee ballots mailed on the day of the primary election in the possession of the auditor. Regular efforts shall be made to tabulate the remaining ballots in time by at least one second working day after the primary election.~~

~~Changes are made to the requirements when absentee ballot mail ballots be received by the county auditor for the ballot to be counted. An absentee ballot by voters who are overseas voters service voters may only be counted if it is received by the county auditor on or before the close of poll places the day of the primary election for which it is issued, whether the ballot is mailed to the auditor or deposited at a poll place deposited directly with the county auditor.~~

**FISCANOTE:** Not requested.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Ninety days after adjournment of session which bill passed.