

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6199

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As of February 5, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to postage on absentee ballot return envelopes.

**Brief Description:** Requiring counties to include prepaid postage on absentee ballot return forms.

**Sponsors:** Senator Morton.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/04/08.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Cindy Calderon (786-7784)

**Background:** Any registered voter may vote by absentee ballot. A request for an absentee ballot may be made as early as 90 days before an election. A voter may obtain an absentee ballot for a single primary or election or may automatically receive an absentee ballot for each subsequent primary or election. Absentee voting requires the voter to place the completed ballot in a security envelope, seal the security envelope, and put the security envelope inside a pre-addressed return envelope.

Absentee ballots may be returned to a designated drop-off box or mailed to the county auditor. Absentee ballots must be signed and postmarked or delivered to the county election officer on or before election day. Currently, absentee voters pay the postage for returning their absentee ballots.

**Summary of Bill:** Return envelopes for absentee ballots will contain prepaid postage.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Since introducing this bill, I have received many comments of concern about the expense of it. I would like to refer this to the federal government so postage, which is federal, can be picked up at the federal level. I believe this would also encourage voter participation.

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*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.*

OTHER: We fully support the idea of asking the federal government to assume these costs.  
We fully support a memorial to Congress.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Morton, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Julie Murray, Washington State Association of Counties; Christina Bridstone,  
Washington Association of County Officials.