
HOUSE BILL 1483

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

By Representatives Green, Miloscia, Hunt, Appleton, McDermott, Ormsby, Hurst, Hasegawa, Dunshee, Springer, Hudgins and Rolfes

Read first time 01/22/2007. Referred to Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs.

1 AN ACT Relating to prepaid postage for primary and general election
2 ballots; and amending RCW 29A.04.420, 29A.40.091, and 29A.48.050.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.04.420 and 2003 c 111 s 147 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (1) Whenever state officers or measures are voted upon at a state
7 primary or general election held in an odd-numbered year under RCW
8 (~~29A.04.320~~) 29A.04.321, the state of Washington shall assume a
9 prorated share of the costs of that state primary or general election.

10 (2) The state shall reimburse counties for the cost of return
11 postage on mail and absentee ballots for primary and general elections.

12 (3) Whenever a primary or vacancy election is held to fill a
13 vacancy in the position of United States senator or United States
14 representative under chapter 29A.28 RCW, the state of Washington shall
15 assume a prorated share of the costs of that primary or vacancy
16 election.

17 (~~(3)~~) (4) The county auditor shall apportion the state's share of
18 these expenses when prorating election costs under RCW 29A.04.410 and
19 shall file such expense claims with the secretary of state.

1 (~~(4)~~) (5) The secretary of state shall include in his or her
2 biennial budget requests sufficient funds to carry out this section.
3 Reimbursements for election costs shall be from appropriations
4 specifically provided by law for that purpose.

5 **Sec. 2.** RCW 29A.40.091 and 2005 c 246 s 21 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 The county auditor shall send each absentee voter a ballot, a
8 security envelope in which to seal the ballot after voting, a larger
9 envelope in which to return the security envelope, and instructions on
10 how to mark the ballot and how to return it to the county auditor. The
11 instructions that accompany an absentee ballot for a partisan primary
12 must include instructions for voting the applicable ballot style, as
13 provided in chapter 29A.36 RCW. The absentee voter's name and address
14 must be printed on the larger return envelope, which must also contain
15 a declaration by the absentee voter reciting his or her qualifications
16 and stating that he or she has not voted in any other jurisdiction at
17 this election, together with a summary of the penalties for any
18 violation of any of the provisions of this chapter. The declaration
19 must clearly inform the voter that it is illegal to vote if he or she
20 is not a United States citizen; it is illegal to vote if he or she has
21 been convicted of a felony and has not had his or her voting rights
22 restored; and, except as otherwise provided by law, it is illegal to
23 cast a ballot or sign an absentee envelope on behalf of another voter.
24 The return envelope must provide space for the voter to indicate the
25 date on which the ballot was voted and for the voter to sign the oath.
26 It must also contain a space so that the voter may include a telephone
27 number. A summary of the applicable penalty provisions of this chapter
28 must be printed on the return envelope immediately adjacent to the
29 space for the voter's signature. The signature of the voter on the
30 return envelope must affirm and attest to the statements regarding the
31 qualifications of that voter and to the validity of the ballot. The
32 return envelope must also have a secrecy flap that the voter may seal
33 that will cover the voter's signature and optional telephone number.
34 For out-of-state voters, overseas voters, and service voters, the
35 signed declaration on the return envelope constitutes the equivalent of
36 a voter registration for the election or primary for which the ballot
37 has been issued. The voter must be instructed to either return the

1 ballot to the county auditor by whom it was issued or attach sufficient
2 first class postage, if applicable, and mail the ballot to the
3 appropriate county auditor no later than the day of the election or
4 primary for which the ballot was issued. Return envelopes for primary
5 and general election ballots shall include prepaid postage.

6 If the county auditor chooses to forward absentee ballots, he or
7 she must include with the ballot a clear explanation of the
8 qualifications necessary to vote in that election and must also advise
9 a voter with questions about his or her eligibility to contact the
10 county auditor. This explanation may be provided on the ballot
11 envelope, on an enclosed insert, or printed directly on the ballot
12 itself. If the information is not included, the envelope must clearly
13 indicate that the ballot is not to be forwarded and that return postage
14 is guaranteed.

15 **Sec. 3.** RCW 29A.48.050 and 2006 c 206 s 8 are each amended to read
16 as follows:

17 The voter shall return the ballot to the county auditor in the
18 return identification envelope. If mailed, a ballot must be postmarked
19 not later than the date of the primary or election. Return envelopes
20 for primary and general election ballots shall include prepaid postage.
21 Otherwise, the ballot must be deposited at the office of the county
22 auditor or the designated place of deposit not later than 8:00 p.m. on
23 the date of the primary or election. All personnel assigned to verify
24 signatures on the return envelope must receive training on statewide
25 standards for signature verification.

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