
SENATE BILL 6199

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Senator Morton

Read first time 01/14/08. Referred to Committee on Government Operations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to postage on absentee ballot return envelopes; and
2 amending RCW 29A.40.091.

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

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.40.091 and 2005 c 246 s 21 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 The county auditor shall send each absentee voter a ballot, a
7 security envelope in which to seal the ballot after voting, a larger
8 envelope with postage prepaid in which to return the security envelope,
9 and instructions on how to mark the ballot and how to return it to the
10 county auditor. The instructions that accompany an absentee ballot for
11 a partisan primary must include instructions for voting the applicable
12 ballot style, as provided in chapter 29A.36 RCW. The absentee voter's
13 name and address must be printed on the larger return envelope, which
14 must also contain a declaration by the absentee voter reciting his or
15 her qualifications and stating that he or she has not voted in any
16 other jurisdiction at this election, together with a summary of the
17 penalties for any violation of any of the provisions of this chapter.
18 The declaration must clearly inform the voter that it is illegal to
19 vote if he or she is not a United States citizen; it is illegal to vote

1 if he or she has been convicted of a felony and has not had his or her
2 voting rights restored; and, except as otherwise provided by law, it is
3 illegal to cast a ballot or sign an absentee envelope on behalf of
4 another voter. The return envelope must provide space for the voter to
5 indicate the date on which the ballot was voted and for the voter to
6 sign the oath. It must also contain a space so that the voter may
7 include a telephone number. A summary of the applicable penalty
8 provisions of this chapter must be printed on the return envelope
9 immediately adjacent to the space for the voter's signature. The
10 signature of the voter on the return envelope must affirm and attest to
11 the statements regarding the qualifications of that voter and to the
12 validity of the ballot. The return envelope must also have a secrecy
13 flap that the voter may seal that will cover the voter's signature and
14 optional telephone number. For out-of-state voters, overseas voters,
15 and service voters, the signed declaration on the return envelope
16 constitutes the equivalent of a voter registration for the election or
17 primary for which the ballot has been issued. The voter must be
18 instructed to either return the ballot to the county auditor by whom it
19 was issued or (~~attach sufficient first class postage, if applicable,~~
20 ~~and~~) mail the ballot to the appropriate county auditor no later than
21 the day of the election or primary for which the ballot was issued.

22 If the county auditor chooses to forward absentee ballots, he or
23 she must include with the ballot a clear explanation of the
24 qualifications necessary to vote in that election and must also advise
25 a voter with questions about his or her eligibility to contact the
26 county auditor. This explanation may be provided on the ballot
27 envelope, on an enclosed insert, or printed directly on the ballot
28 itself. If the information is not included, the envelope must clearly
29 indicate that the ballot is not to be forwarded and that return postage
30 is guaranteed.

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