
HOUSE BILL 1143

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Representatives S. Hunt, Reykdal, Bergquist, Appleton, Dunshee, Orwall, Tarleton, Robinson, Gregerson, Ormsby, Riccelli, Ryu, Springer, Jinkins, Walkinshaw, and Pollet

Read first time 01/14/15. Referred to Committee on State Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to allowing voters to return a voted ballot and
2 signed declaration by fax or email; and reenacting and amending RCW
3 29A.40.110.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.40.110 and 2011 c 349 s 18, 2011 c 348 s 4, and
6 2011 c 10 s 41 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

7 (1) The opening and subsequent processing of return envelopes for
8 any primary or election may begin upon receipt. The tabulation of
9 absentee ballots must not commence until after 8:00 p.m. on the day
10 of the primary or election.

11 (2) All received return envelopes must be placed in secure
12 locations from the time of delivery to the county auditor until their
13 subsequent opening. After opening the return envelopes, the county
14 canvassing board shall place all of the ballots in secure storage
15 until processing. Ballots may be taken from the inner envelopes and
16 all the normal procedural steps may be performed to prepare these
17 ballots for tabulation.

18 (3) The canvassing board, or its designated representatives,
19 shall examine the postmark on the return envelope and signature on
20 the declaration before processing the ballot. The ballot must either
21 be received no later than 8:00 p.m. on the day of the primary or

1 election, or must be postmarked no later than the day of the primary
2 or election. All personnel assigned to verify signatures must receive
3 training on statewide standards for signature verification. Personnel
4 shall verify that the voter's signature on the ballot declaration is
5 the same as the signature of that voter in the registration files of
6 the county. Verification may be conducted by an automated
7 verification system approved by the secretary of state. A variation
8 between the signature of the voter on the ballot declaration and the
9 signature of that voter in the registration files due to the
10 substitution of initials or the use of common nicknames is permitted
11 so long as the surname and handwriting are clearly the same.

12 (4) If the postmark is missing or illegible, the date on the
13 ballot declaration to which the voter has attested determines the
14 validity, as to the time of voting, for that ballot. For overseas
15 voters and service voters, the date on the declaration to which the
16 voter has attested determines the validity, as to the time of voting,
17 for that ballot. Any (~~overseas voter or service~~) voter may return
18 the signed declaration and voted ballot by fax or email by 8:00 p.m.
19 on the day of the primary or election, and the county auditor must
20 use established procedures to maintain the secrecy of the ballot.

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