
State Government Committee

HB 2332

Brief Description: Directing a statewide voter registration data base.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero, McDermott, Schmidt, Woods, Ruderman, Miloscia, Esser and Kagi; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Initiates the creation of a statewide voter registration data base.

Hearing Date: 1/25/02

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

County auditors are responsible for maintaining voter registration information in a computer file on magnetic tape or disk, punched cards, or some other form of data storage containing the records of all registered voters within their jurisdiction. The computer file contains each voter's name, date of birth, residence address, sex, date of registration, applicable taxing district and precinct codes and the last five dates on which the individual voted. County auditors are to provide this information to any person, upon written request, at cost.

County auditors are required to provide a computer tape or data file of the records of the registered voters in their counties to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State provides a duplicate copy of this data to 1) any political party organization or other individual making such request and at cost; 2) the statute law committee, at no cost, and 3) the Department of Information Services for the purpose of creating the jury source list, at no cost.

While county auditors and the Secretary of State are required to furnish the voter registration information to any person or political party making a request, the use of this information is restricted. It may not be used for the purpose of mailing or delivering any advertisement or offer for any property, establishment, organization, product, or service or for the purpose of mailing or delivering any solicitation for money, services, or anything of value. To do so is considered a felony punishable by imprisonment for up to five years and/or a fine of not more than \$10,000. Civil penalties apply as well. However, any person who mails or delivers any advertisement, offer or solicitation for a political purpose is not liable provided

they take reasonable precautions to assure that the data is not used for anything other than political purposes.

Summary of Bill:

The office of the Secretary of State, in conjunction with county auditors, will begin to create a statewide voter registration data base. The Secretary of State will identify a group of voter registration experts who will work on a design for the data base system. The data base will be designed to accomplish the following:

- identify duplicate voter registrations;
- identify suspected duplicate voters;
- screen against the Department of Corrections data base in order to cancel voter registrations of felons;
- provide current signatures of voters as a check for initiative signatures
- provide a comparison between the voter registration data base and the department of licensing change of address data base;
- provide online access for county auditors for real time duplicate checking and update capabilities, provided sufficient funding is available;
- cancel voter registration for persons who have moved to other states and surrendered their Washington state drivers' licenses; and
- ensure that counties maintain legal control of the registration records for that county.

The Secretary of State will report the findings of this group to the Legislature by February 1, 2003.

Rulemaking Authority: No express authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on May 1, 2002. The bill expires on January 1, 2005.