

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6421

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, January 26, 2006

Title: An act relating to eliminating Saturday counting of ballots.

Brief Description: Eliminating Saturday counting of ballots.

Sponsors: Senator Kastama.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 1/24/06, 1/26/06 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Haugen, Kline, Mulliken and Pridemore.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: In counties with a population over 75,000, county auditors are required to process absentee ballots and canvass votes on a daily basis, excluding Sundays and legal holidays. In all other counties, absentee ballots are processed at least every third day.

Summary of Bill: County auditors in all counties are to process absentee ballots and canvass the votes cast at least every third day, eliminating the mandatory Saturday counting of ballots for counties with populations over 75,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Every day ballot counting was added in last year's election reform package, and now that auditors have had a year to implement it, they feel it's an inefficient way to count ballots. When a county can prepare a large batch of ballots to count every third day, they can count 50,000 ballots; whereas a large county counting ballots every day can only count 30,000 in a three day period. Counties shouldn't be subject to the additional costs and inefficiency of every day counting.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Suzanne Sinclair and Bob Terwilliger, Washington Association of County Auditors.