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**SENATE BILL 5140**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Billig, Miloscia, Liias, Rolfes, Cleveland, Darneille, Habib, Keiser, Conway, Jayapal, Chase, Mullet, Pedersen, and Hasegawa

AN ACT Relating to motor voter preregistration for sixteen and seventeen year olds; amending RCW 46.20.155, 29A.08.710, and 42.56.250; creating new sections; and providing a contingent effective date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature is committed to granting equal access to voter registration for all voters. The legislature recognizes the importance of fostering lifelong civic participation. Currently, many young people are denied access to the most popular form of voter registration, motor voter. More than forty percent of new voters are registered through motor voter, but this easy and popular form of voter registration is not available to young people if they obtained their driver's license at the age of sixteen or seventeen. Denial of motor voter to so many young voters has contributed to lower voter registration levels in the youngest voter age groups. In Washington, according to the United States census bureau, only 50.8 percent of eligible citizens between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four are registered to vote, compared to sixty-eight to eighty percent for other age groups. Studies show that young adults who vote are likely to continue to do so throughout adulthood. The legislature recognizes that these representational disparities in registration rates and voting rates within the youth electorate will improve by enacting election policies that engage all young citizens. Therefore, the legislature declares that this act, allowing eligible youth at least sixteen years of age to preregister to vote, is intended to increase voter turnout in young adults.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.20.155 and 2013 c 11 s 90 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Before issuing an original license or identicard or renewing a license or identicard under this chapter, the licensing agent shall determine if the applicant wants to preregister or register to vote or update his or her voter registration by asking the following question:

"Do you want to preregister or register to vote or update your voter registration?"

If the applicant chooses to preregister, register, or update a registration, the agent shall ask the following:

(1) "Are you a United States citizen?"

(2) "Are you ((~~or will you be eighteen~~))at least sixteen years of age ((~~on or before the next election~~))?"

If the applicant answers in the affirmative to both questions, the agent shall then submit the preregistration, registration, or update. If the applicant answers in the negative to either question, the agent shall not submit ((~~a voter registration~~))an application. Information provided for preregistration under this section is exempt from public inspection and copying pursuant to RCW 42.56.250.

(2) The department shall establish a procedure that substantially meets the requirements of subsection (1) of this section when permitting an applicant to renew a license or identicard by mail or by electronic commerce.

**Sec.**  RCW 29A.08.710 and 2005 c 246 s 17 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The county auditor shall have custody of the original voter registration records for each county. The original voter registration form must be filed without regard to precinct and is considered confidential and unavailable for public inspection and copying. An automated file of all registered voters must be maintained pursuant to RCW 29A.08.125. An auditor may maintain the automated file in lieu of filing or maintaining the original voter registration forms if the automated file includes all of the information from the original voter registration forms including, but not limited to, a retrievable facsimile of each voter's signature.

(2) The following information contained in voter registration records or files regarding a voter or a group of voters is available for public inspection and copying, except as provided in RCW 40.24.060: The voter's name, address, political jurisdiction, gender, date of birth, voting record, date of registration, and registration number. The information contained in voter preregistration applications under RCW 46.20.155 is exempt from public inspection and copying. No other information from voter registration records or files is available for public inspection or copying.

**Sec.**  RCW 42.56.250 and 2014 c 106 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The following employment and licensing information is exempt from public inspection and copying under this chapter:

(1) Test questions, scoring keys, and other examination data used to administer a license, employment, or academic examination;

(2) All applications for public employment, including the names of applicants, resumes, and other related materials submitted with respect to an applicant;

(3) The following information held by any public agency in personnel records, public employment related records, volunteer rosters, or included in any mailing list of employees or volunteers of any public agency: Residential addresses, residential telephone numbers, personal wireless telephone numbers, personal electronic mail addresses, social security numbers, driver's license numbers, identicard numbers, and emergency contact information of employees or volunteers of a public agency, and the names, dates of birth, residential addresses, residential telephone numbers, personal wireless telephone numbers, personal electronic mail addresses, social security numbers, and emergency contact information of dependents of employees or volunteers of a public agency. For purposes of this subsection, "employees" includes independent provider home care workers as defined in RCW 74.39A.240;

(4) Information that identifies a person who, while an agency employee: (a) Seeks advice, under an informal process established by the employing agency, in order to ascertain his or her rights in connection with a possible unfair practice under chapter 49.60 RCW against the person; and (b) requests his or her identity or any identifying information not be disclosed;

(5) Investigative records compiled by an employing agency conducting an active and ongoing investigation of a possible unfair practice under chapter 49.60 RCW or of a possible violation of other federal, state, or local laws prohibiting discrimination in employment;

(6) Criminal history records checks for board staff finalist candidates conducted pursuant to RCW 43.33A.025;

(7) ((~~Except as provided in RCW 47.64.220, salary and benefit information for maritime employees collected from private employers under RCW 47.64.220(1) and described in RCW 47.64.220(2)~~))Information contained in voter preregistration records under RCW 46.20.155; and

(8) Photographs and month and year of birth in the personnel files of employees and workers of criminal justice agencies as defined in RCW 10.97.030. The news media, as defined in RCW 5.68.010(5), shall have access to the photographs and full date of birth. For the purposes of this subsection, news media does not include any person or organization of persons in the custody of a criminal justice agency as defined in RCW 10.97.030.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act may be known and cited as the young voter registration equality act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect upon implementation of uniform voter registration software in the state of Washington and a majority of counties. The secretary of state must provide notice of the effective date of this act to affected parties, the chief clerk of the house of representatives, the secretary of the senate, the office of the code reviser, and others as deemed appropriate by the secretary of state.

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