
**State Government, Elections &
Information Technology Committee**

SSB 6021

Brief Description: Extending the period for voter registration.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Kuderer, Billig, Darneille, Palumbo, Frockt, Rolfes, Lias, Keiser, Pedersen, Hunt, Wellman, Conway, Saldaña, Hasegawa, Mullet and Nelson).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires that voter registration by mail and electronically must be received no later than eight days before the election date, rather than submitted no later than 29 days before the election date.
- Changes the deadline for in-person voter registration from eight days before the election date to 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election.
- Changes the deadline to update existing voter registration information from 29 days before the election date to 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election.
- Requires county auditors to accept in-person voter registration at certain locations within the county.

Hearing Date: 2/7/18

Staff: Desiree Omlí (786-7105).

Background:

Voter Registration Deadlines.

To register to vote, a person must submit a registration application electronically or by mail no later than 29 days before the election date, or in person at his or her county auditor's office no later than eight days before the election date.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A person who is already registered to vote may update his or her voter registration information no later than 29 days before the date of the election. If the person fails to transfer his or her residential address by this deadline, they may vote according to their previous registration address.

Voting Centers.

Each county auditor must open a voting center at least 18 days before each election. The voting center must provide certain voting materials and equipment, including voter registration materials, ballots, provisional ballots, disability access voting units, sample ballots, instructions on how to properly vote the ballot, a ballot drop box, and voters' pamphlets when applicable. The county auditor may provide election services at locations in addition to the voting center and has discretion to determine which services will be provided at the additional locations.

Voters Pamphlet.

When at least one statewide measure or office is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot, the Secretary of State (Secretary) must print and distribute a state voters' pamphlet. The pamphlet must contain certain information, for example, information about measures for advisory vote, statements from candidates, contact information for the public disclosure commission and major political parties, a brief statement explaining addition or deletion of language for a proposed measure, and arguments in favor of and against a statewide ballot issue.

Summary of Bill:

Voter Registration Deadlines.

To register to vote electronically or by mail, a voter registration application must be received no later than eight days before the election date. A person may also register in person at the county auditor's office, a voting center, or other location designated by the county auditor up to 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election. A person who is already registered may update their voter registration up to 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election.

The Secretary must establish procedures to record the new or updated voter registrations on an expedited basis.

Voting Centers.

The locations for in-person registration is expanded to include the division of elections if it is in a different city from the county auditor's office. Additionally, for presidential general elections, the county auditor must open additional voting centers to accept in-person registration in each city in the county with a population of 100,000 or more, except for cities where the county auditor's office or division of elections is located. These additional voting centers are not required to be open on the Sunday before the presidential election.

At least one of the additional locations designated by the county auditor for accepting in-person voter registration must provide the same services as voting centers. Voting centers must be located in public buildings, or a building that is leased by a public entity, such as libraries.

Voters Pamphlet.

The Secretary must include in the 2018 general election state voter pamphlet information pertaining to the changes in voter registration deadlines.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 4, 2018.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for sections 1 through 4 relating to extending the period for voter registration and providing additional locations for in-person registration, which takes effect June 30, 2019.