

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2008

As Passed House:
March 4, 2019

Title: An act relating to alternate methods of ballot security.

Brief Description: Concerning alternate methods of ballot security.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Gregerson and Tarleton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/20/19, 2/22/19 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/4/19, 94-2.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits the county auditor to send voters a return envelope that fully shields a ballot from view after the voter's identifying information is removed, rather than sending separate return and security envelopes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Gregerson, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Dolan, Hudgins, Mosbrucker and Smith.

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

Washington allows voting by mail, and the county auditor must send each voter a ballot. The auditor must also send a security envelope in which the voter can conceal the ballot after voting, along with a larger envelope in which to return the security envelope.

The Washington Constitution requires the Legislature to adopt voting methods that ensure the absolute secrecy of a voter's ballot.

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.

Summary of Bill:

Instead of sending separate return and security envelopes, a county auditor may send the voter a return envelope that fully shields the voter's ballot from view after the voter's identifying information is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill gives Pierce County the ability to experiment with its new envelope technology for ballot security. With the new envelope, canvassers can remove the voter's information while still keeping the ballot secured in the return envelope. The new envelope will reduce election costs. It eliminates 20 percent of the physical process of removing ballots from the envelopes, and the flaps take less space. This bill does not impose any new duty on any county, but it lets counties experiment with ways to improve efficiency.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hudgins, prime sponsor; and Julie Anderson and Damon Townsend, Pierce County Auditor's Office.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.