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**HOUSE BILL 1953**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Valdez, Volz, Sutherland, and Ramel; by request of Secretary of State

AN ACT Relating to exempting sensitive voter information on ballot return envelopes, ballot declarations, and signature correction forms from public disclosure; amending RCW 42.56.420; adding a new section to chapter 29A.04 RCW; creating a new section; and declaring an emergency.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 42.56.420 and 2021 c 26 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The following information relating to security is exempt from disclosure under this chapter:

(1) Those portions of records assembled, prepared, or maintained to prevent, mitigate, or respond to criminal terrorist acts, which are acts that significantly disrupt the conduct of government or of the general civilian population of the state or the United States and that manifest an extreme indifference to human life, the public disclosure of which would have a substantial likelihood of threatening public safety, consisting of:

(a) Specific and unique vulnerability assessments or specific and unique response or deployment plans, including compiled underlying data collected in preparation of or essential to the assessments, or to the response or deployment plans; and

(b) Records not subject to public disclosure under federal law that are shared by federal or international agencies, and information prepared from national security briefings provided to state or local government officials related to domestic preparedness for acts of terrorism;

(2) Those portions of records containing specific and unique vulnerability assessments or specific and unique emergency and escape response plans at a city, county, or state adult or juvenile correctional facility, or secure facility for persons civilly confined under chapter 71.09 RCW, the public disclosure of which would have a substantial likelihood of threatening the security of a city, county, or state adult or juvenile correctional facility, secure facility for persons civilly confined under chapter 71.09 RCW, or any individual's safety;

(3) Information compiled by school districts or schools in the development of their comprehensive safe school plans under RCW 28A.320.125, to the extent that they identify specific vulnerabilities of school districts and each individual school;

(4) Information regarding the public and private infrastructure and security of computer and telecommunications networks, consisting of security passwords, security access codes and programs, access codes for secure software applications, security and service recovery plans, security risk assessments, and security test results to the extent that they identify specific system vulnerabilities, and other such information the release of which may increase risk to the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of security, information technology infrastructure, or assets;

(5) The system security and emergency preparedness plan required under RCW 35.21.228, 35A.21.300, 36.01.210, 36.57.120, 36.57A.170, and 81.112.180;

(6) Personally identifiable information of employees, and other security information, of a private cloud service provider that has entered into a criminal justice information services agreement as contemplated by the United States department of justice criminal justice information services security policy, as authorized by 28 C.F.R. Part 20; and

(7)(a) In addition to the information in subsection (4) of this section, the following related to election security:

((~~(a)~~))(i) The continuity of operations plan for election operations and any security audits, security risk assessments, or security test results, relating to physical security or cybersecurity of election operations or infrastructure. These records are exempt from disclosure in their entirety; ((~~and~~))

(ii) Those portions of records containing information about election infrastructure, election security, or potential threats to election security, the public disclosure of which may increase risk to the integrity of election operations or infrastructure; and

(iii) Voter signatures on ballot return envelopes, ballot declarations, and signature correction forms, including the original documents, copies, and electronic images; and a voter's phone number and email address contained on ballot return envelopes, ballot declarations, or signature correction forms. The secretary of state, by rule, may authorize in-person inspection of unredacted ballot return envelopes, ballot declarations, and signature correction forms in accordance with section 2 of this act.

(b) The exemptions specified in (a) of this subsection do not include information or records pertaining to security breaches, except as prohibited from disclosure pursuant to RCW 29A.12.200.

(c) The exemptions specified in (a) of this subsection do not prohibit an audit authorized or required under Title 29A RCW from being conducted.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 29A.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) In accordance with RCW 42.56.420, the following are exempt from disclosure:

(a) Voter signatures on ballot return envelopes, ballot declarations, and signature correction forms, including the original documents, copies, and electronic images; and

(b) A voter's phone number and email address contained on ballot return envelopes, ballot declarations, or signature correction forms.

(2) The secretary of state may, by rule, authorize in-person inspection of unredacted ballot return envelopes, ballot declarations, and signature correction forms. Except as provided under subsection (3) of this section, a person may not photocopy, photograph, or otherwise reproduce an image of the ballot return envelope, ballot declaration, or signature correction form. When inspecting a ballot return envelope, ballot declaration, or signature correction form in person, a person may not carry with them any materials or devices that could be used to record any voter information found on the ballot return envelope, ballot declaration, or signature correction form.

(3) Nothing in this section or RCW 42.56.420(7)(a)(iii) prevents disclosure of any information on ballot return envelopes, ballot declarations, or signature correction forms, other than a voter's signature, phone numbers, and email addresses. Nothing in this section prevents election officials from disclosing information listed in subsection (1) of this section for official purposes. The secretary of state may adopt rules identifying official purposes for which a voter's signature, phone numbers, and email addresses may be disclosed.

(4) For purposes of this section, "signature correction form" means any form submitted by a voter for the purpose of curing a missing or mismatched signature on a ballot declaration or otherwise updating the voter signature.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The exemptions in sections 1 and 2 of this act apply to any public records request made prior to the effective date of this section for which disclosure of records has not already been completed.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

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