

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1310

AS OF MARCH 18, 1991

Brief Description: Establishing voter registration by mail.

SPONSORS: Representatives McLean, R. Fisher, Anderson, Miller, Hine, Moyer, Spanel, Bowman, Kremen, Ballard, Tate, Brekke, Vance, Paris, May, Leonard, Mitchell, Jacobsen, Wineberry, Pruitt, Basich and Wang.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Rod McAulay (786-7754)

Hearing Dates:

BACKGROUND:

The county auditor is the chief registrar of voters within the county. State law directs the auditor to appoint certain deputy registrars and permits the appointment of other registrars. A registration officer must interrogate an applicant for voter registration concerning the applicant's qualifications as a voter. The applicant must produce identification when it is necessary to establish the applicant's date of birth. The applicant must also sign an oath of registration or the registration officer must refuse to register the applicant.

Whenever a voter registration card is sent by an auditor to a new registrant but is returned by the Postal Service as undeliverable, the auditor must initiate an inquiry into the validity of the registration of that voter.

Each deputy registrar other than a city or town clerk or salaried county employee is entitled to receive a fee of not less than 20 cents for each elector registered.

SUMMARY:

Application By Mail or Delivery. An elector may register to vote by mail or other delivery of a completed registration form to the county auditor.

Registration Information and Oath. In addition to the information an applicant for voter registration must provide a registration officer under other provisions of law, an applicant for registration by mail must provide his or her valid Washington driver's license number; or, if the applicant has no such license, a social security number; or, if the applicant has neither, the number from a valid Washington

identocard. The auditor may not process the form until this information is provided.

The applicant must sign a registration oath and a portion of the registration form which may be used as an initiative signature card by the Secretary of State. The registration form must contain a warning stating that a person who knowingly supplies false information or knowingly makes a false declaration as to qualifications is guilty of a class C felony.

Processing Applications. The auditor must review mailed applications to determine whether the information supplied is complete. If it is not, the auditor must promptly send a notice of the deficiency to the applicant. The applicant is considered to be registered as of the date of the postmark of a complete application or, if there is no postmark, as of the date the application was received by the auditor.

Transmitting Registration Cards; Cancellations. The auditor must send the applicant by first class mail, within 45 days but not later than seven days before the next primary or election, a voter registration card identifying his or her precinct. The Postal Service is to be instructed not to forward a voter registration card to any other address and to return undelivered cards to the auditor. If such a voter registration card is returned as undeliverable, the registration of the voter must be immediately canceled. Notice regarding the cancellation must be promptly sent to the voter.

Forms. The Secretary of State must adopt an application form for registering by mail. The secretary must furnish registration forms without cost to the counties.

Registration Fees Repealed. A provision of law that entitles each deputy registrar, with certain exceptions, to receive a fee for each elector registered is repealed.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: January 1, 1992