
State Government Committee

HB 2706

Brief Description: Allowing same-day voter registration transfers.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, McDermott, Moeller, Chase, Flannigan, Hunt, Kirby and Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows voters to register to vote or transfer their voter registration anytime, including election day.

Hearing Date: 1/30/04

Staff: Katie Blinn (786-7114).

Background:

Up to 30 days before an election, a voter may register to vote or transfer his or her voter registration at a county auditors' office, the Office of the Secretary of State, a Department of Licensing office, or one of the other state agencies authorized to handle voter registration services. A voter may transfer his or her voter registration over the phone with the county auditor if the transfer is to another address within the same county. Voters may also mail in a voter registration form, which can be found at many schools, fire stations, libraries, or other government offices, or can be downloaded from the Secretary of State's website. The websites of many government agencies and political organizations contain links to the voter registration form on the Secretary of State's website.

Between 30 and 15 days before an election, a voter may still register to vote or transfer his or her voter registration by appearing at the county auditor's office in person. The person must vote by mail for that election, but will have the option of voting at the polling place or by mail in any future elections. If available, the voter will be given the absentee ballot applicable to his or her precinct while at the county auditor's office.

Within 15 days of an election, any voter registration applications received will apply for elections after the current election. However, a person who is already registered in Washington may go to the polling place for his or her last registered address and, using a provisional ballot, vote those offices and issues for which he or she is also eligible to vote at the new address.

Knowingly providing false information on a voter registration application, or offering or accepting money to register people to vote when the payment is based on a per-person-registered basis, is a class C felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Summary of Bill:

Within 30 days of an election, including the day of the election, a person may still register to vote or transfer his or her voter registration by appearing at the county auditor's office in person. The voter must vote by mail for that election and, if one is available, will be given the absentee ballot applicable to his or her precinct while at the county auditor's office.

Voter registration crimes are increased from class C felonies to class A felonies. A class A felony has a maximum penalty of life in prison and a \$50,000 fine.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2004.

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