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HOUSE BILL 2523

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State of Washington                      59th Legislature                      2006 Regular Session

By Representatives Nixon, Anderson, Rodne and Talcott

Read first time 01/10/2006. Referred to Committee on State Government Operations & Accountability.

1            AN ACT Relating to auditing the signature verification process in  
2 elections; amending RCW 29A.04.530; and adding new sections to chapter  
3 29A.04 RCW.

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

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 29A.04 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7            During the signature verification process, the county auditor must  
8 conduct random audits of verified signatures on batches of ballots for  
9 quality control purposes.

10            (1) The random audits must be performed:

11            (a) Before the outer envelope of a ballot is opened;

12            (b) On at least five percent of the total ballots cast; and

13            (c) By any qualified person other than the initial signature  
14 verifier, including an employee of the county auditor or an authorized  
15 independent auditor.

16            (2) A record of each audit performed must be made, and must include  
17 the date of the audit, the name of the auditor, and the audit results.  
18 Political party representatives must be offered an opportunity to  
19 observe and be present at the time an audit is conducted.

1 (3) An audit report must be compiled and be made available for  
2 public inspection at the time of election certification. The report  
3 must include:

4 (a) The total number of signatures verified, including signatures  
5 not audited;

6 (b) After the initial signature verification process, the total  
7 number of signatures found to be a match and the total number of  
8 signatures found to not match;

9 (c) If the signature verification process requires that a second  
10 person review any signatures found to not match by the initial  
11 reviewer, the total number of signatures initially found to not match  
12 that the second reviewer:

13 (i) Disagrees with the initial finding and determines that the  
14 signature is a match; and

15 (ii) Agrees with the initial finding and determines that the  
16 signature is not a match;

17 (d) As a result of the auditing process, the number of signatures  
18 initially found to be a match that were determined to not match;

19 (e) The number of signatures sent to the canvassing board for a  
20 final determination of whether the signatures match; and

21 (f) The findings of the canvassing board on all signatures sent to  
22 it for a final determination of whether the signatures match.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 29A.04 RCW  
24 to read as follows:

25 The names of election personnel who verify a voter's signature or  
26 who determine that a signature does not match must be recorded and  
27 maintained in such a manner as to allow identification of the person  
28 who made that determination at any time after the determination is  
29 made.

30 **Sec. 3.** RCW 29A.04.530 and 2005 c 243 s 2 are each amended to read  
31 as follows:

32 The secretary of state shall:

33 (1) Establish and operate, or provide by contract, training and  
34 certification programs for state and county elections administration  
35 officials and personnel, including training on the various types of

1 election law violations and discrimination, and training programs for  
2 political party observers which conform to the rules for such programs  
3 established under RCW 29A.04.630;

4 (2) Establish guidelines, in consultation with state and local law  
5 enforcement or certified document examiners, for signature verification  
6 processes. All election personnel assigned to verify signatures must  
7 receive training on the guidelines;

8 (3) Establish guidelines for conducting random signature  
9 verification audits;

10 (4) Administer tests for state and county officials and personnel  
11 who have received such training and issue certificates to those who  
12 have successfully completed the training and passed such tests;

13 ((+4)) (5) Maintain a record of those individuals who have  
14 received such training and certificates; and

15 ((+5)) (6) Provide the staffing and support services required by  
16 the board created under RCW 29A.04.510.

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