

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 1279

As of March 27, 2013

Title: An act relating to motor voter preregistration for sixteen and seventeen year olds.

Brief Description: Allowing motor voter preregistration for sixteen and seventeen year olds.

Sponsors: Representatives Bergquist, Riccelli, Hunt, Sawyer, Farrell, Stonier, Reykdal, Fitzgibbon, Lytton, Liias, Maxwell, Orwall, Jinkins, Upthegrove, Pedersen, Ryu, Carlyle, Roberts, Tharinger, Hudgins, Fey, Morrell, Santos, Pollet, Hansen and Ormsby.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/07/13, 55-42.

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 3/26/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Eligibility for voter registration requires that a person be a United States citizen and at least 18 years of age on or before the next election. Washington allows persons younger than 18 to register to vote if they will be 18 on or before the next election.

Pursuant to federal law, a person may register to vote or transfer a voter registration when applying for or renewing a driver's license or identification card. The person must provide the driver's licensing agent with information necessary to ensure correct identification and location of residence. Before issuing an original license, identification card, or license renewal, the licensing agent must determine if the applicant wants to register to vote or transfer the applicant's registration to a new address. If so, the agent provides the applicant with a voter registration form with instructions, and records the applicant's request to register to vote.

Each driver's licensing facility in the state must send completed voter registration forms to the Secretary of State's office.

Currently, eight states and the District of Columbia authorize individuals younger than 18 years to preregister to vote. The eight states include the following:

- Delaware;
- Hawaii;
- Florida;

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- Maryland;
- North Carolina;
- Rhode Island;
- California; and
- Oregon.

Summary of Bill: A person who is at least 16 years old and who meets all other voter registration requirements is authorized to preregister to vote before being issued an original driver's license, identification card, or license renewal. Information in voter preregistration applications is exempt from public disclosure and copying.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2014.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Registering to vote is not first and foremost in most kids' minds. Kids that have the opportunity to register to vote are more engaged in the classroom. I hope that if kids can preregister to vote, they will have a higher level of engagement at school. That will get them more tuned into our community and what is going on in local elections. We are developing our beliefs, educating ourselves about our community, and getting involved in politics. We look forward to the day when we can express our values and vote. A majority of people now register to vote through motor voter. This will open doors to 16 and 17-year olds and give them something to look forward to. There is a gap between when most young people use the services at DOL and the age they are able to register to vote.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Bergquist, prime sponsor; Maya Garfinkel, Shalujan Williams, WA Bus.

Signed In, Unable to Testify& Submitted Written Testimony: Angie Weiss, Associated Students of the University of WA.