

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5469

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As of February 7, 2017

**Title:** An act relating to automatic voter registration of certain licensees.

**Brief Description:** Concerning automatic voter registration of certain licensees.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fain and Sheldon; by request of Secretary of State.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State Government: 2/08/17.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Automatically registers to vote applicants for enhanced driver's licenses or enhanced identicards who meet voter registration qualifications and provide proof of United States citizenship and do not decline to register.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

**Background:** Voter Registration. Any person who is at least 18 years of age, a United States citizen, a resident of their election precinct for at least 30 days, and has not been convicted of an infamous crime may register to vote in Washington. To register, a person must provide a name, residential address, date of birth, a signature, and an attestation of United States citizenship.

National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA). Among the provisions of the NVRA, popularly known as Motor Voter, is a requirement for states to provide opportunities for voter registration when citizens apply for a new or renew an existing driver's license or identification card.

In Washington, driver's licensing agents ask driver's license or identicard applicants whether the applicant wants to register to vote or update an existing voter registration. An applicant for a standard driver's license or identicard is not asked to disclose their citizenship or legal residency status unless the applicant chooses to register to vote. If an applicant registers to

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vote, the Department of Licensing (DOL) transmits that voter's registration information to the Secretary of State (SOS).

Since 2015, five states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws or administrative rules requiring the automatic voter registration of eligible driver's license and identification card applicants at motor vehicle departments unless the applicant opts out. All of these states' laws require proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence from driver's license and identification card applicants. In 2016, Alaska voters approved a ballot measure automatically registering applicants for dividends from the state's Permanent Fund to vote.

Enhanced Driver's License (EDL) and Enhanced Identocard (EID). An EDL or EID may be issued to a Washington resident that is also a United States citizen if, in addition to meeting all standard driver's license application requirements, they have submitted proof of their identity, citizenship, and state residency, and successfully complete an in-person interview with a DOL licensing services employee. The cost of an EDL or EID is currently \$108 and the documents are valid for a period of six years.

**Summary of Bill:** Applicants for EDLs or EIDs who meet voter registration qualifications and provide the necessary information to register to vote at the time of application may be registered to vote or have an existing voter registration updated by automated process if the applicant's United States citizenship is verified. The applicant must be informed that their information will be used for voter registration and given an opportunity to decline.

If the applicant does not decline to register or update their registration, DOL must transmit the applicant's information to the Secretary of State. The applicant is considered registered to vote as of the date of application. Within 60 days, the auditor sends the applicant a notice acknowledging the applicant's registration and providing precinct and other information. If the application is incomplete, the auditor must send the applicant a verification notice, which must be completed within 45 days to complete the registration.

The Secretary of State may use additional security measures to ensure the accuracy and integrity of electronic voter registration applications.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2018.