

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6190

As of January 17, 2018

Title: An act relating to allowing the use of a signature stamp for voting purposes.

Brief Description: Allowing the use of a signature stamp for voting purposes.

Sponsors: Senators Hunt and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/17/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows persons who cannot sign their own name due to physical disabilities to sign voter registration forms with a signature stamp, if accompanied by two witnesses.
- Allows persons who cannot sign their own name due to physical disabilities to sign ballot declarations with a signature stamp, if accompanied by two witnesses.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Voter Registration Applications. A person must complete an application in order to register to vote. The applicant must provide, at a minimum, the following information about themselves:

- name;
- residential address;
- date of birth;
- a signature attesting to the truth of the information provided; and
- an indication that the person is a United States citizen.

The applicant must sign an oath on the application form that the information provided is true and that the applicant is qualified to vote. The Secretary of State maintains a statewide voter registration database that includes information of every registered voter.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Ballot Declarations. Each active registered voter in the State is issued a mail ballot for a general election. The ballot comes with a declaration the voter must sign to swear that the voter is qualified to vote and has not voted in any other jurisdiction for that election.

Each county canvassing board processes ballot materials returned by a voter. The signed declaration is examined before the ballot is processed and the signature on the ballot materials must be verified as the same as the signature in the voter's registration file. A person who signed a voter registration form by making a mark or can no longer sign their name must do so in the presence of a witness when voting at a voting center.

Summary of Bill: Voter Registration Applications. A voter registration applicant who cannot sign their name due to a physical disability may sign the oath on the voter registration form by either making their mark or using a signature stamp. A signature by mark or stamp must be accompanied by the signatures of two witnesses.

Ballot Declarations. A voter unable to sign their name due to a physical disability on an election ballot may use a signature stamp. A stamp signature must be accompanied by the signatures of two witnesses. If the voter did not use the signature stamp on their voter registration application, the voter must notify the county auditor and submit an image of the stamp in order to verify the signature.

A voter who signed their voter registration by mark or stamp or can no longer sign their name must vote in the presence of two witnesses if voting at a voting center.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This will streamline processes and help members of the disabled community vote. Many counties are already doing this, and the bill promotes consistency in county practices. This is a common sense approach to make sure all ballots are counted. The bill promotes accessibility and dignity for members of the disabled community, and the witness requirement promotes security.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sam Hunt, Prime Sponsor; Mary Hall, Thurston County Auditor; Milene Henley, San Juan County Auditor; Mike Rooney, Washington State Association of County Auditors; David Elliott, Office of the Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.