

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1520

As Passed House:
January 27, 2020

Title: An act relating to calendar election dates on ballot envelopes.

Brief Description: Concerning calendar election dates on ballot envelopes.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Morgan, Hudgins, Rude, Mead, Stonier, Frame, Riccelli, Appleton, Pellicciotti, Kilduff, Doglio and Reeves).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/30/19, 2/19/19 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/1/19, 95-0.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 1/27/20, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires the county auditor to prominently display the date of the election on the envelope in which a voter receives a ballot and other election materials.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Gregerson, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Dolan, Hudgins and Smith.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Mosbrucker.

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

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.

Washington allows voting by mail, and the county auditor must send each voter a ballot. The auditor must also send a security envelope in which the voter can conceal the ballot after voting, along with a larger envelope in which to return the security envelope.

The county auditor must provide notice for any election between five and 15 days prior to the deadline for mail-in voter registration. Notice must be published in one or more newspapers and it must contain information about the date of the election, the offices or measures appearing on the ballot, voter registration, and how to obtain a ballot.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

The county auditor must prominently display the date of the election on the envelope in which a voter receives a ballot and other election materials. The date must be printed in bold type at least size 20 font. This requirement is implemented in phases: it applies to general elections beginning in 2020, primary elections beginning in 2021, and all elections in 2022 and thereafter.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Last session the state passed laws to eliminate barriers to simplify the voting process so all eligible voters have access to democracy, and this bill is a simple but meaningful change to continue to increase access. Even sweepstakes envelopes have a date stamped on the outside of the envelope stating when the recipient has to respond by. Why wouldn't this same information be on the ballot envelope? The date of the election is printed on the ballot, but it uses a small font, is printed in black ink, and blends in with other text.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Morgan, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.