

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1520

As Passed Senate, March 3, 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: Passed House: 3/01/19, 95-0; 1/27/20, 97-0.

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/13/20, 2/21/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 3/03/20, 49-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed First 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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Member; Muzzall, Assistant Ranking Member; Hasegawa and Takko.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: All counties in the state conduct elections entirely by mail. County auditors must send each voter a ballot with a voter declaration that must be signed, a security envelope to conceal the ballot after voting, and a larger envelope to return the security envelope. The voter also must receive instructions on how to obtain information about the election, how to complete the ballot, and how to return the ballot to the county auditor.

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.

The county auditor must provide notice for any election between 5 and 15 days prior to the deadline for mail-in voter registration in one or more newspapers with 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 First Substitute Bill: The county auditor must prominently display the date of the election in bold type and at least size 20 font on the envelope in which a voter receives a ballot and other election materials:

- for general elections beginning in 2020;
- for primary elections beginning in 2021; and
- for all elections in 2022 and thereafter.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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 is a simple fix to get constituents more engaged, particularly in low-turnout areas. Pierce County has tested this and we know it works. We hope that people will see the due date like on a utility bill. What makes this bill workable is the ability to use variable spray, so auditors do not need large pre-printed batches of envelopes.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Melanie Morgan, Prime Sponsor; Julie Anderson, Washington State Association of County Auditors.

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