

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1357

---

---

As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
State Government & Elections, February 23, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to voters' pamphlets for overseas and service voters.

**Brief Description:** Concerning voters' pamphlets for overseas and service voters.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Mosbrucker, Gregerson, Chase and Berry).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/3/21, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** State Government & Elections: 3/17/21; 2/09/22, 2/23/22 [DPA].

### Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Allows the county auditor to send printable, electronic versions of statewide and local voters' pamphlets to service and overseas voters who request them.

---

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Hasegawa and Hawkins.

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

**Background:** Overseas and Service Voters. Ballots must be mailed to service members and U.S. citizens residing outside the country who are registered to vote at least 45 days before each primary or general election. Overseas and service voters receive a return envelope that enables them to vote postage-free if returned through the U.S. Postal Service, the U.S. Armed Forces Postal Service, or the postal service of a U.S. Foreign Embassy. Overseas and service voters may also return their ballots by fax or email.

---

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

Voters' Pamphlets. The Secretary of State must print and distribute a voters' pamphlet to each household in the state, public libraries, and other locations the Secretary of State deems appropriate whenever a statewide ballot measure or office is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot. Each county auditor must produce a local voters' pamphlet for the entire county at each election. There is no requirement that voters' pamphlets be mailed to service and overseas voters.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** County auditors may send printable electronic voters' pamphlets to overseas and service voters who request one.

**EFFECT OF STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):**

County auditors are no longer required to mail voters' pamphlets to requesting service and overseas voters, but may, at their discretion, send printable electronic versions upon request. A change to the deadline for the Office of Financial Management to submit fiscal impact measures for state ballot measures is removed.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

**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 on Engrossed Substitute House Bill (Regular Session 2022):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Military personnel serving abroad have limited time to talk to their families online, if any at all, and would rather spend that time catching up than asking who to vote for. We want to make sure everyone has education around who they choose as a candidate. In my time overseas, there was no guarantee we'd get ballots in the mail, making voting difficult. This makes sense with ballots being transmitted electronically to Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters.

OTHER: Auditors and the Secretary of State support the intent of the bill and getting as much information as possible to UOCAVA voters. An amendment is requested to the deadline for OFM to submit fiscal impact statements on ballot measures, and discussions to find the right date are ongoing. Under the bill's language, OFM would have four days this year to produce fiscal impact statements for ballot measures, which is not enough time to provide a good analysis to allow voters to make informed choices.

Another amendment is suggested to allow auditors to send printable PDF files to UOCAVA voters. The timeline in the bill would make it impossible to edit, print, proof, get feedback on, translate, and then mail voters' pamphlets on time. Most UOCAVA voters receive their ballots electronically and then print them— almost 60 percent in King County, and 95 percent in Chelan County. If the voter has requested electronic delivery of their ballot, we should also allow them to receive the voters' pamphlet electronically.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Gina Mosbrucker, Prime Sponsor; Shane Inman, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

OTHER: Brian Hatfield, Office of Secretary of State; Julie Wise, King County Director of Elections; Scott Merriman, Office of Financial Management; Skip Moore, Chelan County Auditor/Washington State Association of County Auditors.

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