

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1962

C 56 L 24

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Improving voter registration list accuracy by improving voter address change processes for county election offices and voters.

Sponsors: Representatives Low, Cheney, Ryu, Leavitt, Couture, Ramos, Morgan, Reeves, Rule, Graham, Jacobsen, Kloba, Sandlin, Hutchins, Paul, Riccelli, Wylie and Fosse; by request of Secretary of State.

House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations
Senate Committee on State Government & Elections

Background:

Voter Address Changes.

A voter who moves within a county may transfer the voter's registration to a new address in several ways, including: submitting a voter registration request, appearing in person before the county auditor or another designated location, telephoning or emailing the county auditor, or submitting information to the Department of Licensing (DOL) and other designated agencies. Under these methods, a voter must take action to transfer the voter's registration by the eighth day prior to a primary or general election. A voter who moves within a county may also transfer the voter's registration to their new address by sending the county auditor a request eight days prior to a primary or general election.

A voter who moves from one county to another within Washington must submit a voter registration form, or information to the DOL or another agency providing voter registration services. The county auditor of the voter's new county of residence must transfer the voter's registration from the voter's previous county of residence.

Voter Address Change Requirements for County Auditors.

Each county auditor must request change of address information from the postal service for all mail ballots. The county auditor must transfer a voter registration if the county auditor receives information from the postal service, the DOL, or another agency providing voter

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registration services indicating that the voter has moved within the county and send an acknowledgement notice of the transfer to the voter. If the county auditor receives information from the postal service, the DOL, or another agency providing voter registration services that the voter has moved from one county to another within Washington, the county auditor must place a voter on inactive status. A voter is also placed on inactive status if election mail is returned as undeliverable without a new address or if the county auditor receives information from the postal service, the DOL, or another agency providing registration services that the voter has moved out of the state.

The county auditor must send a confirmation notice to all of a voter's known addresses if the county auditor places the voter on inactive status. The confirmation notice includes a request that the voter verify their address or provide a new address. If the voter's response to the confirmation notice indicates that the voter has moved within the county, the county auditor must transfer the voter's registration. If the voter's response to the confirmation notice indicates that the voter has moved out of the county but within Washington, the county auditor must cancel the voter's registration. The county auditor must also cancel the voter's registration if the voter's response indicates that the voter moved out of the state.

Help America Vote Act.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002, requires each state to maintain a computerized statewide voter registration list that contains the registration information of every registered voter in the state. The computerized registration list must be administered at the state level and serve as the single system for storing and managing the official list of registered voters throughout the state. All voter registration information obtained by a local election official must be entered into the computerized list.

Summary:

All methods that are currently available to transfer a voter's registration to a new address within the county are made available to all registered voters. This includes sending the county auditor a request, appearing in person before a county auditor or other designated location on the day of a primary or general election, telephoning or emailing the county auditor, and submitting information to the Department of Licensing (DOL) or another designated agency. A voter who moves out of a county may still, but is not required to, change the voter's address for voter registration purposes by submitting a voter registration form or information to the DOL or another agency providing voter registration services.

It is specified that the timeline for transferring a voter's address by sending the county auditor a request is by the eighth day prior to a primary or general election, rather than on the eighth day before a primary or general election.

If a county auditor receives change of address information or a voter's response to a confirmation notice indicating that the voter has moved out of the county but within the state, the county auditor must notify the auditor of the voter's new county of residence,

rather than canceling the registration or placing the voter on inactive status. Upon receiving notice of the voter's new address, the auditor of the voter's new county of residence must update the voter's registration and send the voter an acknowledgement notice.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 97 0

Senate 49 0

Effective: June 1, 2025