

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1962

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government & Elections, February 20, 2024

Title: An act relating to improving voter registration list accuracy by improving voter address change processes for county election offices and voters.

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.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/9/24, 97-0.

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 2/15/24, 2/20/24 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes the methods of transferring a voter registration address that are currently only available to persons moving within a county available to persons moving from one county to another.
- Directs county auditors to notify the county auditor in a voter's new county of residence of change of address information rather than canceling the registration or placing the voter on inactive status.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

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.

Staff: Greg Vogel (786-7413)

Background: Voter Address Changes. A voter who moves within a county can transfer their voter registration to their new address in several ways, including sending the county auditor a 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 most methods, a voter must take action to transfer their voter registration at least eight days prior to an election. If a voter appears in person before the county auditor or at a voting center or other designated location, the voter may make the request up until 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election.

A voter who moves from one county to another must submit a voter registration form, or information to 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 auditor must transfer the registration of a voter and send an acknowledgement notice to the new address informing the voter of the transfer if change of address information received from the postal service or a registration agency indicates that the voter has moved within the county. The auditor must place a voter on inactive status and send to all known addresses a confirmation notice and a voter registration application if change of address information indicates that the voter has moved from one county to another. The auditor must place a voter on inactive status and send to all known addresses a confirmation notice if:

- any document mailed by the auditor is returned as undeliverable without address correction information; or
- change of address information indicates that the voter has moved out of state.

If the response to a confirmation notice indicates the voter has moved within the county, the auditor must transfer the voter's registration and send the voter an acknowledgment notice. If the response indicates the voter moved out of the county, but within the state, the auditor must cancel the voter's registration and notify the county auditor of the voter's new county of residence. If the response indicates the voter has left the state, the auditor must cancel the voter's registration on the official state voter registration list.

Summary of Bill: All methods that are currently available to transfer a voter's registration to a new address within a county are made available to voters transferring their registration from one county to another. For most methods, a voter must make the change by the eighth day prior to an 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on June 1, 2025.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a good voter roll cleanup bill, which is where we start in ensuring accurate elections. We appreciate the great and difficult work our county auditors do. It's no surprise on average that a high percentage of voters move each year. Sometimes that can lead to confusion when it comes to voter registration. This bill can help clear up the voter address change process—a common sense solution.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Sam Low, Prime Sponsor; Brian Hatfield, Office of Secretary of State; Julie Wise, King County Director of Elections.

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