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## State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

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### HB 1713

**Brief Description:** Concerning automatic voter registration for tribal members.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Stearns, Lekanoff, Simmons, Parshley, Peterson, Fosse, Street, Doglio, Reed, Pollet, Ormsby, Hill and Ramel.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides a process for automatic voter registration for members of a federally recognized tribe, including procedures for state-tribal compacts between the Secretary of State and tribes.

**Hearing Date:** 2/18/25

**Staff:** Connor Schiff (786-7093).

#### Background:

##### Automatic Voter Registration.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) must collect and transmit the voter registration information of an individual who applies for, renews, or updates an enhanced driver's license (EDL) or enhanced state identification card (EID) to the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) if the person is a citizen, meets the requirements for voter registration, and provides a signature image. This information must be transmitted from the DOL to the OSOS daily. Through this process, the person is automatically registered to vote.

Within five business days after a person is automatically registered to vote or has their address automatically changed at the DOL, the county auditor must send the person an automatic voter registration acknowledgement notice package. This is a package of information sent by

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nonforwardable mail by the county auditor to a person who was automatically registered to vote or had their address changed at the DOL. The package must include a prepaid return form that the person may return by mail to decline to be registered to vote or have their address changed. The package must also include a notice stating that if the person does not meet the qualifications to vote, they must return the form and decline to be registered. The OSOS may require other information to be included in the package. If the county auditor receives information from the DOL regarding the applicant after the deadline to register to vote by mail or electronically (eight days before the election), then the package may be sent after the election.

If a person replies stating that they do not wish to be registered to vote, and the reply is received by the county auditor within 15 days after the package is mailed, the person is removed from the list of registered voters and is deemed to have never registered to vote. If a notice declining registration is returned after that deadline, the county auditor must cancel the voter's registration.

An applicant who is automatically registered to vote at the DOL is considered registered to vote as of the date that an election official receives their information from the DOL, unless:

- the voter declines registration; or
- the elections official receives the voter's information after the deadline to register to vote by mail or electronically, in which case the voter is considered registered to vote as of the day after the election.

The Governor, in consultation with the OSOS, may decide whether a state agency that provides public assistance or services to persons with disabilities and collects, processes, and stores certain information, including verification of citizenship information, must provide automatic voter registration.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The Secretary of State is authorized to enter into state-tribal compacts with a federally recognized tribes for the purposes of automatic voter registration of members of the tribe. The Secretary of State must establish an application and approval process, procedures, and timeline for execution of the state-tribal compacts.

Upon final execution of a state-tribal compact, the Secretary of State must receive and process voter registration information for members of a tribe that: 1) meet the requirements for voter registration; 2) provide the necessary information to determine the individual is eligible to vote; and 3) provide a signature image. Members of the tribe who meet these requirements are automatically registered to vote.

An individual who is automatically registered to vote through this process is considered registered to vote as of the date that an election official receives the individual's information, unless:

- the individual declines registration; or
- the elections official receives the individual's information after the deadline to register to

vote by mail or electronically, in which case the individual is considered registered to vote as of the day after the election.

Within five business days after an individual is automatically registered to vote, the county auditor must send the person an automatic voter registration acknowledgement notice package. If an individual replies to the acknowledgement notice package stating that they do not wish to be registered to vote, and the reply is received by the county auditor within 15 days after the package is mailed, the individual is removed from the list of registered voters and is deemed to have never registered to vote. If a notice declining registration is returned after that deadline, the county auditor must cancel the voter's registration.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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