

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1648

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to elections.

Brief Description: Extending the voter registration period.

Sponsors: Representatives Wineberry, Anderson, Veloria,
Pruitt, King, Springer, Leonard and J. Kohl.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 18, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members:
Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams,
Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority
Member; Campbell; Conway; and Pruitt.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: State law requires that the registration files of precincts be closed against original voter registrations or transfers for 30 days immediately preceding each primary or election. At least five days before the precinct files are closed, the county auditor must publish a notice of the closing of the files.

Summary of Bill: A qualified but unregistered elector may register to vote in a primary or election after the close of the precinct registration files for that primary or election under a special registration and absentee ballot voting procedure. Such a person must register in person in the office of the county auditor or at a location designated by the auditor and must register not later than the 15th day before the primary or election. The person may vote only by absentee ballot. Upon registering, the person must immediately apply for an absentee ballot. The person's registration form and absentee ballot application are to be promptly transmitted to the county auditor.

The county must publish a notice regarding this special registration and absentee ballot voting procedure when the auditor announces the closing of the precinct files.

No person may vote in a precinct polling place at the primary or election unless he or she has registered to vote at least 30 days before that primary or election.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (1) The poll books for voting in the precincts are printed three weeks before the election. Allowing special registrations up to the 15th day before the election presses election resources, but it is manageable because only absentee voting is permitted. (2) Oregon allows registrations two weeks closer to the election than Washington does. If Oregon can do it, so can Washington.

Testimony Against: (1) Voter registration should be permitted at the polls on election day. (2) The registrations under this bill should not be limited to designated locations; any deputy registrar should be able to register a person under this bill.

Witnesses: Representative Wineberry (in favor); Karen Flynn, Kitsap County Auditor (in favor); and Kevin Klumpp (opposed to the restrictions in the bill).