

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2403

*As Passed House
February 11, 1992*

Title: An act relating to ongoing absentee voter status.

Brief Description: Expanding eligibility for ongoing absentee voter status.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Anderson, McLean, Pruitt, Chandler, O'Brien, Hine, Jones, Bowman, Ferguson, Orr, Brough, May and Hochstatter.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, January 22, 1992, DP;
Passed House, February 11, 1992, 91-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
STATE GOVERNMENT**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Pruitt, Vice Chair; McLean, Ranking Minority Member; Bowman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler; R. Fisher; Grant; Moyer; O'Brien; and Sheldon.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: The registered voters of this state may choose to vote by absentee ballot rather than by voting at the polls. A voter must, however, request the absentee ballot from the county auditor.

In 1985, the Legislature established a means by which certain voters may request to vote by absentee ballot on an "ongoing" basis, rather than having to request absentee ballots on an election-by-election basis. A disabled voter or a voter over the age of 65 may choose to be an "ongoing" absentee ballot voter. A voter's status as an "ongoing" absentee ballot voter is generally valid from the time of application until January 1st of the next odd-numbered year. Following that date, the auditor must send the voter an application to renew the "ongoing" status. This status is also terminated by: the written request of the voter; the death or disqualification of the voter; the cancellation of

the voter's registration record; or the return of an "ongoing" absentee ballot as being undeliverable.

Summary of Bill: Any registered voter may choose to vote by absentee ballot on an "ongoing" basis. A person's status as an "ongoing" absentee ballot voter no longer automatically terminates on January 1st of each odd-numbered year.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 14, 1992.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1992.

Testimony For: (1) The bill will improve participation in the democratic process. (2) The bill will increase administrative efficiency by permitting more absentee ballots to be ready to be mailed earlier in the process and by reducing the number of individual requests which must be processed.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: George F. Tyler (in favor); John Pearson, Office of the Secretary of State (in favor); and Jane Hague, King County Records and Elections (in favor).