

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1190

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, APRIL 1, 1993

Brief Description: Providing for voter registration by affidavit.

SPONSORS: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Anderson, Reams, Wang, Rust, J. Kohl, Thibaudeau, G. Cole, Appelwick, Leonard, Johanson and Pruitt)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Loveland, Oke, and Winsley.

Staff: Rod McAulay (786-7754)

Hearing Dates: March 30, 1993; April 1, 1993

BACKGROUND:

When registering to vote, an applicant must provide a voter registration officer certain information concerning the applicant's qualifications as a voter, including, when necessary, documentation to establish the applicant's date of birth. The applicant must also sign an oath of registration.

Whenever a voter registration card is sent by an auditor to a new registrant but is returned by the Postal Service as undeliverable, the auditor must initiate an inquiry into the validity of the registration of that voter.

Each deputy registrar other than a city or town clerk or salaried county employee is entitled to receive a fee of not less than 20 cents for each elector registered.

SUMMARY:

Registration by Affidavit - Forms; Oath. A procedure for registering to vote by affidavit is established. The form to be used is to be prescribed by the Secretary of State by rule. Such a form must require the applicant to provide the information required under current law for registering to vote. The instructions must direct the applicant to sign a portion of the form that can be used as an initiative signature card and to sign and attest to a voter registration oath. The form must contain, in a conspicuous place, a

warning that knowingly providing false information on the form or knowingly making a false declaration about the applicant's qualifications is a Class C felony and must describe the penalties associated with such a felony.

Delivery and Processing. The completed form may be filed by mail or other delivery with the county auditor. If the information is incomplete, the auditor must promptly send the applicant a notice of the deficiency. If the information is complete and the form and oath are signed, the person is registered on the date of the postmark on the affidavit or, if not postmarked or the postmark is illegible, on the date the completed affidavit was received by the auditor. The auditor must send to the registrant, by first class mail, a voter registration card within 45 days of receiving the affidavit. For an affidavit filed before the closing of the precinct registration files, the card must be sent not later than seven days before the next primary or election.

Undeliverable Registration Card. The postal service is to be instructed not to forward the registration card to any other address and return to the auditor cards which are undeliverable. If the card is returned as undeliverable, the voter registration of the person is immediately canceled. A notice regarding the cancellation must be sent to the person. This notice may be forwarded by the Postal Service.

Form. The affidavit form must be designed to permit the elector to register and, if appropriate, to cancel a previous voter registration in this state. The Secretary of State must develop the form in consultation with the county auditors and must provide free copies of the form to the auditors. A replica of the form, such as one printed in a newspaper or telephone book, may be used to register to vote. The county auditor is to maintain a supply of forms and provide copies to interested persons.

Other. This procedure for voter registration is supplemental to other forms of registration. A provision of law is repealed which entitles each deputy registrar, with certain exceptions, to receive a fee for each elector registered.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Will facilitate the registration of voters and increase participation in elections.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Karen Flynn, Washington State Auditors Association (pro); Gary McIntosh, Office of Secretary of State (pro)