

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5511

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, MARCH 8, 1993

Brief Description: Enabling voter registration by mail.

SPONSORS: Senators Loveland, Winsley, Quigley, Snyder and Pelz; by request of Secretary of State

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5511 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Rod McAulay (786-7754)

Hearing Dates: February 12, 1993; February 16, 1993

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5511 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Spanel, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Gaspard, Hochstatter, Niemi, Pelz, Quigley, Snyder, Sutherland, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Hearing Dates: March 5, 1993; March 8, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Residents of the state of the age of 18 or older, not otherwise disqualified, may register to vote in person before a qualified registrar or at a Department of Licensing facility when obtaining or renewing a driver's license or identification card. County auditors are designated as the chief registrar of voters and custodian of voter records. The county auditors may appoint city and town clerks and others as deputy registrars.

When registering to vote, a person is required to provide certain documentation of their identity and to sign a sworn statement attesting to the truthfulness of the information provided.

Voter registration must be done in person before a registrar or at a driver's licensing facility.

SUMMARY:

The Secretary of State, in consultation with the county auditors, prescribes a form to be used by citizens to register to vote by mail. The form includes all of the information required to register in person and a portion of the form to be signed by the registrant serves as an initiative signature verification card. The form contains a warning that providing false information is a class C felony and includes a declaration signed by the registrant as to the truthfulness of the information provided.

Upon receipt of a properly completed form, the county auditor enters the registrant on the voter rolls and sends a registration card to the registrant. Provisions are made for removing the voter from the rolls when a card is returned by the Post Office.

Registration by mail forms are furnished to the counties by the Secretary of State at no cost to the counties and shall be widely disseminated by the county auditors.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The redundant language is deleted.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE:

Counties are required to reimburse the state for the costs of the voter registration forms during 1994 and 1995. These costs are then prorated among the political subdivisions participating in elections during 1994 and 1995.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 2, 1993

TESTIMONY FOR (Government Operations):

Will make the electoral franchise more accessible to the citizenry. Will ease the administration of voter registration.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (Government Operations): None

TESTIFIED (Government Operations): John Pearson, Office of Secretary of State; Karen Flynn, Kitsap County Auditor

TESTIMONY FOR:

The proposed substitute eliminates the fiscal impact to the state by prorating the start-up cost among all political jurisdictions participating in elections during 1994 and 1995.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Fred Saeger, Washington Association of County Officials