

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1508

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### As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Administration

**Title:** An act relating to absentee ballots.

**Brief Description:** Maintaining a list of absentee ballots.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Wensman, D. Schmidt, Cooper, Chopp, Doumit, Blalock, Dickerson, B. Thomas and Thompson.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Government Administration: 2/11/97, 1/14/98, 1/16/98 [DP].

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives D. Schmidt, Chairman; D. Sommers, Vice Chairman; Scott, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit; Dunn; Reams; L. Thomas; Wensman and Wolfe.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Gardner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dunshee and Smith.

**Staff:** Steve Lundin (786-7127).

**Background:** Voters may cast their ballots under several different procedures. The most common procedure is for voters to appear at designated polling sites and cast their ballots. Increasingly voters are using an alternative procedure and cast their ballots using absentee ballots. A voter may obtain an absentee ballot for a single primary or election or may become an ongoing absentee voter and automatically obtain an absentee ballot for each subsequent primary or election.

At any primary, general or special election, any political party or committee may designate a person for each polling place to check a list of registered voters to determine who has and has not voted. That person may not be a precinct election officer, and the party or committee must provide the list of voters.

**Summary of Bill:** The county auditor is required to maintain a list of absentee ballots that have been returned. The county auditor begins that list on the first day that absentee ballots may be processed. The list must be updated at the end of each business day up to and including the Monday before the general election or primary election. The list must be made available to the public to view.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This is the same as poll watchers getting lists of people who voted at the polls. Most auditors already do this. This is fair.

**Testimony Against:** We need integrity in the system. This appears to be a campaign election tool. This will take valuable time for election staff.

**Testified:** (Pro): Representative Wensman, prime sponsor; Sam Reed, Thurston County Auditor; and Vern Spatz, County Auditors Association.

(Con): Sherry Bockwinkel, Citizens for Leaders with Ethics and Accountability Now.