

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1638

As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Administration

Title: An act relating to an absentee ballot request.

Brief Description: Permitting an absentee ballot request on the election or primary day.

Sponsors: Representative Kessler; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives D. Schmidt, Chairman; D. Sommers, Vice Chairman; Scott, Ranking Minority Member; Gardner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Doumit; Dunn; Dunshee; Reams; Smith; L. Thomas; Wensman and Wolfe.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

Background: A registered voter may request an absentee ballot for a single primary or election or may become an ongoing absentee voter and receive an absentee ballot for all subsequent primaries and elections.

A request for an absentee ballot may be made up to the day before the primary or election for which it is issued.

However, a voter who is both confined to a hospital and who was admitted to the hospital five or fewer days before a primary or election may apply by messenger for an absentee ballot on the day of the primary or election. The application must include a signed statement by the hospital administrator, or designee, verifying the voter's date of admission and status as a patient on the day of the primary or election.

Summary of Bill: A voter may apply for an absentee ballot on the day of the primary or election.

A signed statement by a hospital administrator verifying a voter's date of admission and status as a patient is no longer required to be included with the special application for an absentee ballot that a voter confined to a hospital on the day of the primary or election may submit by messenger to the county auditor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This is important. Elections can be won by one or two votes so we should be sure that all registered voters may be able to vote if they want to. This will help a little.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (Pro): Representative Kessler, prime sponsor; Sam Reed, Thurston County Auditor; Sherry Bockwinkel, (CLEAN) Citizens for Leaders with Ethics and Accountability Now; and Vern Spatz, Grays Harbor Auditor.