

2 SSB 5640 - H AMD 0247 WITHDRAWN 04/24/99

3 By Representative D. Schmidt

4

5 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
6 following:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

8 (1) The current statute relating to the timing of the primary  
9 election may not allow adequate time for absentee voters, especially  
10 military personnel living overseas, to review the candidates and issues  
11 appearing on the general election ballot before casting their votes;

12 (2) The proliferation of permanent absentee voters presents  
13 increasing difficulties for county auditors to canvass ballots in a  
14 timely way, which in turn may adversely affect the general election  
15 campaign of a candidate involved in a close primary race; and

16 (3) A delay in counting votes and processing ballots negatively  
17 impacts the public's right to timely election results and thus harms  
18 our electoral process.

19 Therefore, the mission of the task force established by section 2  
20 of this act includes, but is not limited to, a review of issues  
21 relating to the timing of the primary election, the canvassing of  
22 ballots, and the certification of election results. The task force  
23 shall consider alternates to the current statutes that relate to these  
24 issues, and shall provide recommendations accordingly.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A task force to study and make  
26 recommendations regarding the date for primary elections is  
27 established. The task force membership consists of the following  
28 thirteen members:

29 (1) Three citizen members from across the state, appointed jointly  
30 by the secretary of state, the president of the senate, and the co-  
31 speakers of the house of representatives;

32 (2) Two members of the senate, one from each of the largest two  
33 caucuses, appointed by the president of the senate, and two members of  
34 the house of representatives, one from each of the largest two  
35 caucuses, appointed by the co-speakers of the house of representatives;

- 1 (3) The secretary of state or the secretary's designee;  
2 (4) Three county elections officials designated by the Association  
3 of County Officials; and  
4 (5) A representative of each major political party in the state,  
5 appointed by the chair of the state central committee for the party.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The task force shall report its  
7 recommendations to the governor, the secretary of state, and the  
8 appropriate standing committees of the senate and house of  
9 representatives no later than December 1, 1999. The task force  
10 terminates on December 31, 1999.

11 **Sec. 4.** RCW 29.62.020 and 1995 c 139 s 2 are each amended to read  
12 as follows:

13 ~~(1) ((No later than the tenth day after a special election or~~  
14 ~~primary and no later than the fifteenth day after a general election,~~  
15 ~~the county auditor shall convene the county canvassing board to process~~  
16 ~~the absentee ballots and canvass the votes cast at that primary or~~  
17 ~~election.))~~ At least every third day after a special election, primary,  
18 or general election and before certification of the election results,  
19 except Sundays and legal holidays, the county auditor shall convene the  
20 county canvassing board or their designees to process absentee ballots  
21 and canvass the votes cast at that special election, primary, or  
22 general election, if the county auditor is in possession of more than  
23 twenty-five ballots that have yet to be canvassed. The county auditor  
24 may use his or her discretion in determining when to convene the  
25 canvassing board or their designees during the final four days before  
26 the certification of election results in order to protect the secrecy  
27 of any ballot.

28 Each absentee ballot previously not canvassed that was received by  
29 the county auditor two days or more before the convening of the  
30 canvassing board or their designees and that either was received by the  
31 county auditor before the closing of the polls on the day of the  
32 special election, primary, or general election for which it was issued,  
33 or bears a date of mailing on or before the special election, primary,  
34 or general election for which it was issued, must be processed at that  
35 time. The tabulation of votes that results from that day's canvass  
36 must be made available to the general public immediately upon  
37 completion of the canvass.

1       (2) On the tenth day after a special election or a primary and on  
2 the fifteenth day after a general election, the canvassing board shall  
3 complete the canvass and certify the results. Each absentee ballot  
4 that was returned before the closing of the polls on the date of the  
5 primary or election for which it was issued, and each absentee ballot  
6 with a date of mailing on or before the date of the primary or election  
7 for which it was issued and received on or before the date on which the  
8 primary or election is certified, shall be included in the canvass  
9 report.

10       (~~(2)~~) (3) At the request of any caucus of the state legislature,  
11 the county auditor shall transmit copies of all unofficial returns of  
12 state and legislative primaries or elections prepared by or for the  
13 county canvassing board to either the secretary of the senate or the  
14 chief clerk of the house."

--- END ---