1 **ESSB 6363** - H AMD TO SG COMM AMD (6363-S.E AMH SG H5012.1)
2 By Representative Ericksen
3 On page 8, beginning on line 29 of the amendment, strike all of
4 section 10 and insert the following:
5 "**Sec. 10.** RCW 29.36.060 and 1991 c 81 s 32 are each amended to
6 read as follows:
7 PROCESSING ABSENTEE BALLOTS. (1) The opening and subsequent
8 processing of return identification envelopes for any primary or
9 election may begin on or after the tenth day ((prior to such)) before
10 the primary or election. The opening of the security envelopes and
11 tabulation of absentee ballots ((shall)) must not commence until after
12 8:00 ((o'clock)) p.m. on the day of the primary or election.
13 (2) After opening the return identification envelopes, the county
14 canvassing board or its representative shall place all of the
15 ((ballot)) inner security envelopes in containers that can be secured
16 with numbered seals. These sealed containers ((shall)) must be stored
17 in a secure location until after 8:00 ((o'clock)) p.m. of the day of
18 the primary or election. Absentee ballots that are to be tabulated on
19 an electronic vote tallying system may be taken from the inner
20 envelopes and all the normal procedural steps may be performed to
21 prepare these ballots for tabulation before sealing the containers.
22 (3) Before opening a return envelope that contains the inner
23 security envelope and absentee ballot, the canvassing board, or its
24 designated representatives, shall examine the postmark, statement, and
25 signature ((on each return envelope containing the security envelope
26 and absentee ballot)). An absentee ballot may be counted only if the
27 return identification envelope was signed by the date of the primary or
28 election for which it was issued and was either returned before the
29 close of the polls on the day of the primary or election for which it
30 was issued or has a date of mailing by the date of the primary or
31 election for which it was issued. They shall verify that the voter's
32 signature on the return envelope is the same as the signature of that
33 voter in the registration files ((for that voter)) of the county. The
34 date of mailing is the postmark date. However, for ((absentee))
35 registered voters ((other than out-of-state voters, overseas voters,
36 and service voters, if the postmark is illegible)) casting absentee

1 ballots, the date on the return envelope to which the voter ((attests
2 shall)) has attested determines the validity, as to the ((time of
3 voting, of)) date of mailing for that absentee ballot ((under this
4 chapter)) if the postmark is missing or is illegible. For out-of-state
5 voters, overseas voters, and service voters, the date on the return
6 envelope to which the voter has attested determines the validity as to
7 the date of mailing for that absentee ballot. For any absentee
8 ((voter)) ballot, a variation between the signature of the voter on the
9 return envelope and the signature of that voter in the registration
10 files due to the substitution of initials or the use of common
11 nicknames is permitted so long as the surname and handwriting are
12 clearly the same."

EFFECT: Prohibits an absentee ballot to be counted unless the voter to whom the ballot was issued signs the outer return envelope on or before the day of the primary or election for which it was issued. Clarifies that the date of attestation on the return identification envelope for absentee, out-of-state, overseas, and service voters determines the validity of the date of mailing, instead of the date of voting. Changes references to "return envelopes" to "return identification envelopes."