

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2332

PARTIAL VETO

C 185 L 02

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Directing a statewide voter registration data base.

Sponsors: By Representatives Romero, McDermott, Schmidt, Woods, Ruderman, Miloscia, Esser and Kagi; by request of Secretary of State.

House Committee on State Government
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on State & Local Government

Background:

County auditors are responsible for maintaining voter registration information in a computer file on magnetic tape or disk, punched cards, or some other form of data storage containing the records of all registered voters within their jurisdiction. The computer file contains each voter's name, date of birth, residence address, sex, date of registration, applicable taxing district and precinct codes, and the last five dates on which the individual voted. County auditors are to provide parts of this information to any person, upon written request, at cost.

County auditors are required to provide a computer tape or data file of the records of the registered voters in their counties to the Office of the Secretary of State. The Office of the Secretary of State provides a duplicate copy of this data to: (1) any political party organization or other individual making such request, at cost; (2) the Statute Law Committee, at no cost; and (3) the Department of Information Services for the purpose of creating the jury source list, at no cost.

While county auditors and the Office of the Secretary of State are required to furnish the voter registration information to any person or political party making a request, the use of this information is restricted. It may not be used for the purpose of mailing or delivering any advertisement or offer for any property, establishment, organization, product, or service or for the purpose of mailing or delivering any solicitation for money, services, or anything of value. To do so is a felony punishable by imprisonment for up to five years and/or a fine of not more than \$10,000. Civil penalties apply as well. However, person who mails or delivers an advertisement, offer or solicitation for a political purpose is not liable provided he or she takes reasonable precautions to assure that the data is not used for anything other than political purposes.

Certain state agencies are required to provide voter registration services for employees and the public. The Secretary of State informs the public of the availability of voter registration and provides standard voter registration forms for use by these state agencies.

Institutions of higher education are required by federal law to provide voter registration services to students.

Summary:

The Office of the Secretary of State, in conjunction with county auditors, will begin to create a statewide voter registration data base. The Office of the Secretary of State will identify a group of voter registration experts who will work on a design for the data base system. The data base will be designed to accomplish the following:

- identify duplicate voter registrations;
- identify suspected duplicate voters;
- screen against the Department of Corrections data base in order to cancel voter registrations of felons;
- provide current signatures of voters as a check for initiative signatures;
- provide a comparison between the voter registration data base and the Department of Licensing change of address data base;
- provide online access for county auditors for real time duplicate checking and update capabilities, provided sufficient funding is available;
- cancel voter registration for persons who have moved to other states and surrendered their Washington drivers' licenses; and
- ensure that counties maintain legal control of the registration records for that county.

The Office of the Secretary of State will report the findings of this group to the Legislature by February 1, 2003.

Institutions of higher education are required to set up an active prompt on its course registration web site or other web site actively used by students that will link the student to the Secretary of State's voter registration web site.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 98 0
Senate 45 0 (Senate amended)
House 97 0 (House concurred)

Effective: June 13, 2002

Partial Veto Summary: The Governor vetoed the sections pertaining to the establishment of a group of voter registration experts to work on designing a statewide voter

registration data base. (These provisions were included in SB 6324, which become effective June 13, 2002)