

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5587

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As Passed Senate, March 7, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to voter accessibility.

**Brief Description:** Requiring voting devices to be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fairley, Keiser, Kline, Winsley, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/19/03 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/7/03, 49-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Fairley, Kastama and McCaslin.

**Staff:** Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

**Background:** The Secretary of State is required to inspect, evaluate, publicly test, and approve all voting systems used for conducting a primary or general election in this state.

**Summary of Bill:** The Secretary of State must adopt rules and establish standards for voting technology and systems used by the state, or any political subdivision, to be accessible for individuals with disabilities in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation as other voters. Voting systems and technology purchased, upgraded, or replaced, after the effective date of this act must comply with the accessibility standards.

If funds are available, each polling location must have at least one certified voting unit that provides access to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This bill allows blind individuals to vote in private and without assistance, providing the blind voter with the same voter secrecy enjoyed by sighted voters.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Mike Freeman, Denise MacKenstadt, National Federation of the Blind; Gary Burdett, Wa. Council for the Blind.