

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2694

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 16, 2006

Title: An act relating to eliminating Saturday counting of ballots.

Brief Description: Eliminating Saturday counting of ballots.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government Operations & Accountability (originally sponsored by Representatives Haigh, Nixon, Sump and Hunt).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/06, 94-1.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/16/06 [DP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Benton, Fairley, Haugen, Kline, McCaslin, Mulliken and Pridemore.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Roach, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: In counties with a population over 75,000, county auditors are required to process absentee ballots and canvass votes on a daily basis, excluding Sundays and legal holidays. In all other counties, absentee ballots are processed at least every third day.

Summary of Bill: In all counties, county auditors are not required to count ballots on Saturday. Language is inserted to clarify that processing and canvassing occurs after the election and before certification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Eliminating Saturday counting of ballots will save money. Daily counting slows down the absentee ballot process, and the auditors would like to see changes to help speed up the process by raising the ballot threshold that requires daily counting, eliminating daily counting, or raising the population threshold for counties that have to count daily.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; Suzanne Sinclair, Island County Auditor.