

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 3041

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

Title: An act relating to voter registration.

Brief Description: Modifying voter registration timelines.

Sponsors: Representatives Alexander, Nixon, Haigh, Darneille and P. Sullivan.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/08/06, 98-0.

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; Haugen, Kline, McCaslin and Pridemore.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Roach, Ranking Minority Member and Benton.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: Voter registration files close for new registrations or transfers 30 days before every election. A person seeking to vote in a precinct polling place must register at least 30 days before the election. State law provides a late registration period starting at the close of registration (30 days before the election) and ending on the 15th day before the election. During the late registration period, a person may register to vote or transfer his or her registration; however, it must be done in person at the county auditor's office or at a voter registration location specifically designated for this purpose, and the voter must vote an absentee ballot.

Summary of Bill: Voter registration transfers are no longer allowed during the late registration period. The late registration period is open only for new registrations.

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: This is an elections integrity bill that doesn't disenfranchise voters. An individual may receive two ballots if he or she transfers their registration after ballots have been mailed, and this bill prevents that by not allowing transfers after ballots are mailed. It is

difficult for small counties to keep up with registration changes close to the election, and this bill helps those counties by not allowing transfers when ballots are in the mail.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Alexander, prime sponsor; Kim Wyman, Thurston County Auditor and Washington Association of County Auditors; Thad Duvall, Douglas County Auditor; Shane Hamlin, Office of the Secretary of State.