
HOUSE BILL 2594

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2006 Regular Session

By Representatives Hasegawa, McCoy, Santos, Pettigrew, Kenney,
Hudgins, Upthegrove, Hunt, O'Brien, Haigh, Kagi and Dickerson

Read first time 01/11/2006. Referred to Committee on State
Government Operations & Accountability.

1 AN ACT Relating to bilingual voting assistance; reenacting and
2 amending RCW 29A.44.240; and adding a new section to chapter 29A.04
3 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 29A.04 RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) The county auditor shall provide bilingual voting registration
8 forms, ballots, and all voting materials for any language group that
9 meets the following criteria:

10 (a)(i) More than three and three-fourths percent of the voting-age
11 citizens in a county belong to a single language minority community and
12 have limited English abilities; or

13 (ii) More than seven thousand five hundred voting-age citizens in
14 a county belong to a single language community and have limited English
15 abilities; and

16 (b) The illiteracy rate of the citizens in the language group is
17 higher than the national illiteracy rate.

18 (2) If more than three percent of the voting-age population in a

1 given county speak a common native language other than English, the
2 county must recruit staff members and poll workers who are fluent in
3 that native language and in English to assist with elections.

4 (3) The percentage requirements of this section must be based on
5 information contained in the most recent United States census.

6 **Sec. 2.** RCW 29A.44.240 and 2003 c 111 s 1123 and 2003 c 53 s 180
7 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

8 (1) Voting shall be secret except to the extent necessary to assist
9 sensory or physically disabled voters, or voters who require
10 translation.

11 (2) If any voter declares in the presence of the election officers
12 that because of sensory or physical disability or a language barrier he
13 or she is unable to register or record his or her vote, he or she may
14 designate a person of his or her choice or two election officers from
15 opposite political parties to enter the voting machine booth with him
16 or her and record his or her vote as he or she directs. If a voter
17 cannot speak English, he or she may use an interpreter to communicate
18 with election officials.

19 (3) A person violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.

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