
SENATE BILL 5015

State of Washington

62nd Legislature

2011 Regular Session

By Senators White, Kohl-Welles, and Nelson

Read first time 01/10/11. Referred to Committee on Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to ballot tabulation; and amending RCW 29A.40.110.

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

3 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.40.110 and 2009 c 369 s 40 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 (1) The opening and subsequent processing of return envelopes for
6 any primary or election may begin upon receipt. The tabulation of
7 absentee ballots (~~((must not))~~) may commence (~~((until after))~~) at 8:00
8 (~~((p.m.))~~) a.m. on the Monday immediately before the day of the primary
9 or election. Tabulation results must be held in secrecy, as provided
10 in RCW 29A.84.730, until after 8:00 p.m. on the day of the primary or
11 election.

12 (2) All received absentee return envelopes must be placed in secure
13 locations from the time of delivery to the county auditor until their
14 subsequent opening. After opening the return envelopes, the county
15 canvassing board shall place all of the ballots in secure storage until
16 (~~((after 8:00 p.m. of the day of the primary or election))~~) tabulation.
17 Absentee ballots that are to be tabulated on an electronic vote
18 tallying system may be taken from the inner envelopes and all the

1 normal procedural steps may be performed to prepare these ballots for
2 tabulation.

3 (3) Before opening a returned absentee ballot, the canvassing
4 board, or its designated representatives, shall examine the postmark,
5 statement, and signature on the return envelope that contains the
6 security envelope and absentee ballot. All personnel assigned to
7 verify signatures must receive training on statewide standards for
8 signature verification. Personnel shall verify that the voter's
9 signature on the return envelope is the same as the signature of that
10 voter in the registration files of the county. Verification may be
11 conducted by an automated verification system approved by the secretary
12 of state. For any absentee ballot, a variation between the signature
13 of the voter on the return envelope and the signature of that voter in
14 the registration files due to the substitution of initials or the use
15 of common nicknames is permitted so long as the surname and handwriting
16 are clearly the same.

17 (4) For registered voters casting absentee ballots, the date on the
18 return envelope to which the voter has attested determines the
19 validity, as to the time of voting for that absentee ballot if the
20 postmark is missing or is illegible. For overseas voters and service
21 voters, the date on the return envelope to which the voter has attested
22 determines the validity as to the time of voting for that absentee
23 ballot.

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