
Government Operations & Elections Committee

HB 1103

Brief Description: Concerning uniform ballot design.

Sponsors: Representatives Van De Wege, Hunt, Stanford, Lias, Hayes, Morrell, Appleton, Fitzgibbon, Hudgins, Reykdal and Bergquist.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires by the year 2020 use of vote tallying systems that allow for a vote to be cast by filling in an oval, and ballots designed so that a vote is cast by filling in an oval.
- Allows the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise Services and in consultation with county auditors, to develop a master contract for vote counting equipment for purchase by the counties.

Hearing Date: 1/24/13

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Voting Systems

The Secretary of State (Secretary) has the authority to inspect, evaluate, test, and approve voting systems for use in the state. The Secretary may not approve any system that does not: provide for voter secrecy, permit the voter to vote for any candidate or measure; correctly register all votes cast for any candidate or measure; and allow a vote for more than one candidate by a single operation of the voting system (except for President and Vice President of the United States). No system may be used unless it has been tested and certified by an independent testing authority designed by the United States Election Assistance Commission.

Four different voting systems currently are used within the state. The WinEDS 4.0 voting system requires the voter to connect an arrow for a response, and the system is currently used in five

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counties. The Hart voting system requires the voter to fill in a rectangle as a response, and is used by 24 counties. The ES&S Unity voting system requires voters to fill in an oval as a response, and is in use by nine counties. Finally, the Assure 1.2 voting system in use by King County requires voters to fill in an oval as a response.

Ballot Design

Ballots are required to be uniform within a precinct and must identify the type of election, the county, and the date of the primary election. The ballot must include instructions on the proper method of recording a vote. The various offices and issues on a ballot must be clearly separated from each other.

Summary of Bill:

The Secretary may approve only those vote tallying systems that allow for a vote to be cast by filling in an oval. The Secretary, in conjunction with county auditors, must develop a uniform ballot format that must be used by each county and implemented by the year 2020.

By the year 2020, or upon the replacement of vote tallying equipment, whichever occurs first, all ballots for all elections must be designed so that a vote is cast by filling in an oval.

The Secretary, in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise Services and in consultation with county auditors, may develop a master contract for vote counting equipment for purchase by the counties.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2013.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.