
Government Operations & Elections Committee

HB 2561

Brief Description: Changing ballot tabulation and receipt provisions.

Sponsors: Representatives Taylor and Manweller.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Starting January 1, 2015, all ballots for a primary or election must be received by the county auditor by 8 p.m. on election night.Tabulation of ballots may begin at 8 a.m. three-business days before the day of the primary or election.

Hearing Date: 2/5/14

Staff: Amanda Ondrick (786-7296) and Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Washington is a vote by mail state. Voters must get their ballots to the county auditor by 8 p.m. the day of the election or primary or have their ballot post marked no later than the day of the election or primary. Opening and processing of returned envelopes for any primary or election may begin upon receipt although tabulation of ballots may not commence until after 8pm on the day of the primary or election. The election by mail statute requires that the canvassing board examine the postmark on the return envelope and signature on the declaration before processing the ballot. If the postmark is missing or illegible, the date on the ballot's declaration determines the validity for the ballot. For overseas voters and service voters, the date on the declaration to which the voter has attested determines the validity, as to the time of voting, for that ballot.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Starting January 1, 2015, the Mail in Ballot Deadline Act requires that all ballots be received by the county auditor by 8 p.m. election night regardless of the postmarked date on the envelope. Tabulation of ballots may start at 8 a.m. three-business days before the day of the primary or election. The election results must be held in secrecy until 8 pm on the day of the primary or election. The canvassing board shall examine the oath and signature on the declaration before processing the ballot. For overseas voters or service voters returning ballots by mail, the date on the declaration must not be later than the day of the primary or election in order for the ballot to be valid. Fourteen days after the primary or special election and 21 days after the general election, the county canvassing board shall complete the canvass and certify the results. Each ballot within the proper time requirements must be included in the canvas.

If any part of this act is in conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application to the agencies concerned. Rules adopted under this act must meet federal requirements that are a necessary condition for the receipt of federal funds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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