

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1039

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to allowing the use of a signature stamp for voting purposes.

Brief Description: Allowing the use of a signature stamp for voting purposes.

Sponsors: Representatives S. Hunt, Johnson, Gregerson and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 1/15/15, 1/22/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Permits a physically disabled person to use a signature stamp for completing voter registration and ballot forms.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregory and Hawkins.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

Signatures on Voter Registration Applications.

A person must complete an application in order to register to vote. The minimum information required to register includes:

- name;
- residential address;
- date of birth;
- signature attesting to the truth of the information provided; and

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- indication that the person is a United States citizen.

The applicant must sign an oath on the application form that the information provided is true, and that he or she is qualified to vote. The Secretary of State maintains a statewide voter registration database that includes information of every registered voter.

Signatures on Ballot Declarations.

Each active registered voter in the State is issued a mail ballot for a general election. The ballot comes with a declaration the voter must sign to swear that he or she is qualified to vote, and has not voted in any other jurisdiction for that election.

Each county canvassing board processes ballot materials returned by a voter. The signed declaration is examined before the ballot is processed. The signature on the ballot material must be verified to be the same as the signature in the voter's registration file. Such verification may be automated on a system approved by the Secretary of State. A person who signed a voter registration form by making a mark, or can no longer sign his or her name, must be identified by a witness when voting at a voting center.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A voter registration applicant who cannot sign his or her name due to a physical disability may sign the oath on the voter registration form by either making his or her mark or using a signature stamp. A signature by mark or stamp must be accompanied by the signature of two witnesses.

A voter unable sign his or her name due to a physical disability on an election ballot may use a signature stamp. A stamp signature must be accompanied by the signature of two witnesses. If the voter did not use the signature stamp on his or her voter registration application, he or she must notify the county auditor and submit an image of the stamp in order to verify the signature.

A voter must be identified by two people when voting at a voting center, if the voter signed his or her voter registration by mark or stamp or can no longer sign his or her name.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

A stamp signature on a registration form or a ballot declaration must be accompanied by two witness signatures. A person signing by stamp on a ballot at a voting center must be identified by two witnesses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Using a rubber stamp would make voting easier for persons with disabilities and removes another barrier to help some voters participate in elections. Currently, voters are notified that a stamp signature is not allowed, and they are given other opportunities to complete a ballot. This bill would have a relatively small impact. Signatures are checked and verified when they arrive against the voter registration system, to prevent fraud or to prevent someone from voting more than once in an election.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Michael Rooney, Pierce County Auditor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.