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## State Government Committee

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### HB 1210

**Brief Description:** Concerning poll-site voting and voting identification requirements.

**Sponsors:** Representatives G. Hunt, Taylor, Muri, Zeiger, Griffey, Shea, Scott, Van Werven, Buys and Haler.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allows counties to return to poll-site voting.</li><li>• Requires photo identification for voting purposes.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 1/29/15

**Staff:** Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

**Background:**

Absentee voting was allowed as early as 1915 for voters not able to be present to vote at the polls on election day. Voters with disabilities and voters over the age of 65 were authorized to vote by absentee ballot in 1933. In 1967 county auditors were authorized to designate a mail ballot precinct if the precinct had less than 100 registered voters. The Legislature expanded absentee voting in 1974 to all voters who made a request, and by 1993 those voters could request to vote absentee on an on-going basis. In 2005 county auditors were allowed to conduct all elections entirely by mail ballot with the approval of the county legislative authority, and in 2011 Washington became the second state to conduct all elections by mail.

Any voter may vote in person at the county auditor's office or designated voting center beginning 18 days before the election and ending at 8 p.m. on the day of the election. Persons voting at a voting center must sign a ballot declaration or provide photo identification.

**Summary of Bill:**

Poll-Site Voting.

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*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.*

Any registered voter may submit an initiative to the people of the county to re-establish poll-site voting. Signatures of registered voters in an amount equal to 8 percent of the voters in the county who voted in the last gubernatorial election must be obtained in order for the initiative to qualify for the ballot. The initiative must appear on the general election ballot. Counties must establish procedures and timelines for processing initiatives.

If the initiative passes, the county auditor must issue a press release and provide information on the county website informing voters that poll-site voting will commence at the next election and how voters may vote at the polls. Information regarding poll-site voting must also be included in the local voters' pamphlet.

Provisions and procedures for poll-site voting are re-established. Any county that offers poll-site voting must automatically be issued a mail ballot unless the voter has indicated that he or she will vote at the polls.

#### Voter Identification.

Valid and current photo identification must be provided to participate in any primary, special election, or general election. Persons wishing to vote at a voting center or a poll site, if applicable, must provide the identification at the time of voting. If the voter is not able to provide the identification, he or she will be issued a provision ballot which will be accepted if the signature on the declaration matches the signature on the voter's registration record and the voter provides an accepted identification within five days of the election.

First time vote-by-mail voters may provide the photo identification at the time of registration or at any time prior to the time ballots are mailed. If the identification is not provided prior to the time ballots are mailed, the voter must vote in person at a voting center or, if applicable, the polls. Once the identification is provided, a notation must be made in the voter's file indicating that the required identification was provided and ballots for future elections may be mailed.

Acceptable photo identifications include:

- a state-issued driver's license or photo identification card;
- a United States passport;
- a United States military photo identification card;
- a student identification card issued by an accredited institution of higher education; or
- a public assistance identification card issued by a municipal, county, state, or federal government office or agency.

Overseas or service voters are exempt from the identification requirements, as are those who have a religious objection to being photographed, have filed an affidavit affirming such beliefs, and provided a nonpicture form of identification with the county auditor.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested.

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