

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1428

As Passed House:
March 4, 2015

Title: An act relating to extending the time period for voter registration.

Brief Description: Concerning voter registration.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Fitzgibbon, S. Hunt, Jinkins, Tarleton, Bergquist, Gregerson, Goodman and Pollet).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 1/29/15, 2/11/15 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/4/15, 60-38.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Changes the mailing deadline for submitting a voter registration application from 29 to 28 days.
- Changes the deadline for voter registration online or through a designated agency from 29 days to 11 days.
- Changes the deadline for registering in person from eight days to 11 days for any election.

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:

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.

Every person must register in order to vote in any primary, special, or general election. To be eligible for an election, a voter must submit his or her registration application online or by mail no later than 29 days before the election date. A voter may also register in person at his or her county auditor's office no later than eight days before the election date.

A person may update his or her registration at least 29 days before an election for the change to be effective for that election. A voter who does not transfer his or her residential information by that deadline may still vote according to his or her previous address.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A voter may register to vote in an upcoming primary, special, or general election by mail no later than 28 days before the date of that primary or election. A person also may register no later than 11 days before an election, in the following ways:

- online;
- in person at his or her county auditor's office, or alternate location;
- when applying for or renewing a driver's license; or
- through any designated agency that has a way to capture voter registration through a computerized application process.

A person may update his or her registration, by any method, no later than 28 days before an election to be effective for that election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a big step forward for improving voter access and making local administration more efficient. The 29-day mailing deadline often falls on the Columbus Day holiday. Voters who put their ballots in the mail that day miss the deadline because there is no mail service that day. Moving the deadline up to 28 days avoids this problem. The 11-day deadline gives two full weekends for in-person and online applications, and makes the deadline land on a Friday rather than a Monday.

This bill synchronizes the online and in-person registration period to the same deadline. Online registration increases accuracy, saves time for county auditors, and is more convenient than in-person registration. The mailing deadline should not be pushed closer than the 28 days, because sometimes the mail is delayed in delivery. The 11-day deadline should also apply to Motor Voter registration.

This bill would allow more access to college student voters who are often in transition periods during the deadline period and who only have a few days to update their voter

information upon moving to school. College campuses have high voter turn-out percentages within a county.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Fitzgibbon, prime sponsor; Lori Augino, Office of the Secretary of State; Ashlyn Salzman, Washington Student Association, Washington State University-Vancouver; Debbie Adelstein, Washington State Association of County Auditors; Anne Belson, Washington Student Association, The Evergreen State College; and Monty Cobb, Washington Association of County Officials.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.