
State Government Committee

HB 1724

Brief Description: Providing prepaid postage for primary and general election ballots.

Sponsors: Representatives Walkinshaw, S. Hunt, Ortiz-Self, Fey, Fitzgibbon, Bergquist, Hansen, Tharinger, Senn, Tarleton, Robinson, Appleton, Reykdal, Gregerson, Pollet, Farrell, Van De Wege, Ormsby and Hudgins.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires return envelopes for primary and general election ballots include prepaid postage.

Hearing Date: 2/11/15

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

In 2011 Washington became the second state in the nation to adopt an entirely vote-by-mail system, requiring all counties to conduct elections entirely by mail ballot. Elections are administered at the local level. The county auditor sends each voter a ballot with instructions, a declaration that the voter must sign, a security envelope in which to conceal the ballot after voting, and a larger envelope in which to return the security envelope.

Although counties conduct elections, they are not responsible for all election costs. Every city, town, and district is liable for its proportionate share of the costs when such elections are held in conjunction with other elections. Similarly, the State pays a prorated share of the costs of the following elections:

- state primaries and general elections held in odd-numbered years when state officers or measures are voted upon; and
- primary or vacancy elections held to fill a vacancy for United States senator or representative.

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.

For the elections listed above, the county auditor apportions the State's share of the election expense and files an expense claim with the Secretary of State.

Summary of Bill:

Return envelopes for primary and general election ballots must include prepaid postage, the cost of which shall be born by the State.

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.