

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1428

As of March 27, 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: Passed House: 3/04/15, 60-38.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 3/26/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: To register to vote, a person must submit an application via mail or an online registration no later than 29 days before the day of the next primary, special, or general election, or in person at the county auditor's office no later than eight days before the election.

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

Summary of Bill: The deadlines for registration to participate in an upcoming primary, special, or general election are changed as follows:

- registrations sent through the mail must be sent no later than 28 days before the election for the voter to participate;
- registrations at state agencies which transmit voter registrations electronically to the Secretary of State, including driver's licensing facilities, must be submitted no later than 11 days before the election for the voter to participate;
- electronic registrations must be sent no later than 11 days before the election for the voter to participate; and
- in-person registrations must be submitted to the county auditor's office, or another location designated by the county auditor, no later than 11 days before the election for the voter to participate.

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.

A voter may update their registration through any means up to 28 days before an election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Processes should be as understandable and accessible as possible, and multiple voter deadlines don't work. This bill will help encourage more people toward registering online, which saves time for county auditors, takes up less staff time, and is less error prone. The 29-day mail-in deadline falls on Columbus Day sometimes, and that's caused errors. There may be places other than county auditor's office that are the best location for voter registration. Syncing up the online deadline with the in-person deadline improves access while still maintaining enough time to complete the checks required by federal law. This provides a clear and concise message to voters about our deadlines. The lines to register to vote at our facility have been lengthy in past presidential election years, so encouraging a remote way to register to vote would be helpful.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Fitzgibbon, prime sponsor; Lori Augino, Office of the Secretary of State; Rene LeBeau, King County Elections; Monty Cobb, WA Assn. of County Officials.

Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying: No one.