
**State Government, Elections &
Information Technology Committee**

HB 1342

Brief Description: Allowing voted ballots to be returned electronically.

Sponsors: Representatives Bergquist, Koster, Gregerson and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows any voter to return a voted ballot and signed declaration electronically, without requiring the original ballot also be returned by the election certification date.

Hearing Date: 2/3/17

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

The federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) was created in 1986 to ensure service members and citizens living abroad are registered to vote and submit absentee ballots. The Military and Overseas Empowerment (MOVE) Act of 2009 modified the UOCAVA to allow service and overseas voters to return absentee ballots electronically.

In Washington, each county auditor mails ballots to all registered voters. Mailed ballots contain return envelopes with a declaration signature line. All ballots and signed declarations must be received by 8 p.m. on election day, or postmarked by election day.

Voters may return a voted ballot along with a signed declaration by fax or email, but those ballots are not counted unless the county auditor also receives the hard copy of the ballot and signed declaration before the date of certification. Overseas and service voters may return a voted ballot and the signed declaration by fax or email, but are not further required to send a hard copy in order to be counted.

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.

Summary of Bill:

All ballots sent by mail must include instructions for returning ballots electronically. Any voter may return the signed declaration and voted ballot electronically, without having to return a hard copy by the certification date.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2017.

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