

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1468

As Passed House:
March 1, 2017

Title: An act relating to extending the time period for voter registration to no later than eleven days before the day of a primary, special election, or general election.

Brief Description: Concerning voter registration.

Sponsors: Representatives Manweller, Fitzgibbon, Griffey, Hudgins, Jinkins, Haler, Riccelli, Kilduff, Pollet and Doglio; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 2/3/17, 2/14/17 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/1/17, 84-14.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the voter registration deadline for all methods of registration to 11 days before an election or primary.
- Changes the deadline for updating a voter registration to 28 days before an election or primary, and changes the voter registration deadline to 11 days once the new state voter registration database becomes operational.
- Directs the transfer of a voter's residential information through the new state voter registration database, when such function becomes operational.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Koster, Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregerson, Irwin, Kraft and Pellicciotti.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

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.

Background:

Any eligible voter must register in order to vote in any primary, special, or general election. To be eligible to vote in 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 Bill:

The deadline to register to vote is changed to 11 days before the date of an election or primary. This deadline includes all forms of voter registration, including in-person, mail, and online registration methods.

The deadline for updating a voter's registration will change to 11 days when the Secretary of State's new voter registration database becomes operational. The deadline for updating a voter registration is changed from 29 to 28 days before the election. An updated registration that changes a voter's residence from one county to another is transferred through a state voter registration database, when such functions become operational.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 2, relating to changing the deadline for updating voter registration information to a 11 days, and sections 4 through 6, relating to the transfer of updated voter registrations through a state database, which takes effect when the state voter registration database becomes operable.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Registration deadlines are confusing to the public to know which deadlines apply to which method of registration. Creating an 11-day deadline for all forms of voter registration will unify the process and make it easier for people to remember when they have to register. Eleven days before an election is sufficient time to verify registrations before sending out ballots. The Office of the Secretary of State's new data management system will help to streamline the voter registration process.

Extending the registration deadline will increase the opportunity for more people to vote and encourage greater participation in the election process. People, especially young people, are more likely to register as the election gets closer and they become more excited and engaged in the issues.

Counties should be allowed the option of extending the deadline to the day of the election, if they have systems in place to make it happen.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Kim Wyman and David Elliot, Office of the Secretary of State; Alex Hur, Washington Voting Justice Coalition; Nancy Sapiro, League of Women Voters of Washington; Julie Anderson, Washington State Association of County Auditors; and Crystal Anguay, Washington Bus.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.