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

HB 1471

Brief Description: Collecting voter registration sign up information for persons seventeen years of age during the period one year prior to attaining eighteen years of age including the designation of voter registration locations and voter sign up locations.

Sponsors: Representatives Bergquist, Stambaugh, Pettigrew, Haler, Kagi, Fitzgibbon, Griffey, Jinkins, Appleton, Tarleton, Muri, Pollet, Hudgins and Doglio; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Enables persons 17 years of age to sign up to register to vote.
- Requires county auditors to coordinate Temperance and Good Citizenship Day events.
- Requires the Secretary of State to provide for storage of pending records.

Hearing Date: 2/3/17

Staff: Megan Palchak (786-7105).

Background:

The Secretary of State (SOS) is the chief election officer for all federal, state, county, city, town, and district elections. County auditors supervise all primary, general, and special elections. They must provide places for holding elections, and provide the supplies and materials necessary. The SOS must ensure that each county auditor is provided with the most recent version of election laws. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency overseeing kindergarten through grade 12 public education in Washington State.

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.

Under common school provisions, if the State Board of Education requires civics coursework, the content must include, but is not limited to election issues, elections, ballot measures, initiatives, and referenda. Persons under 18 years of age may not register to vote.

Persons who are 18 years and older may register to vote by mail, electronically, or at the Department of Licensing (DOL), state offices, and colleges.

Except for service and overseas voters, only persons registered to vote shall be permitted to vote at: (1) any election held for the purpose of electing persons to public office, (2) any recall election of a public officer, (3) any election held for the submission of a measure to any voting constituency, and (4) any primary election.

Voters' rights are protected by the Constitution and under law, and include the fundamental right to: (1) vote at all elections, (2) vote secretly, and (3) vote for any candidate for each office.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature and Secretary of State (SOS) express shared intent to: (1) formalize a registration sign up process for those not yet 18 years of age, (2) authorize persons 17 years of age to sign up to register to vote, (3) encourage civic participation in educational environments, and (4) engage new voters.

Persons 17 years of age may sign up to register to vote by submitting an application by mail or online. Applicants who submit complete voter applications are considered to be registered to vote on their eighteenth birthday, or the original date of mailing delivery, whichever is applicable. The DOL is required to query applicants regarding their interest in signing up to register to vote.

County auditors must coordinate Temperance and Good Citizenship Day events in each history or social studies class for persons 17 years of age to sign up to register to vote, if funds are provided for outreach activities.

Voter registration sign up requirements include: (1) a valid Washington license or identicard, (2) an affirmation that information provided is true, (3) an affirmation that use of his or her driver's license or identicard signature is allowed, (4) an affirmation of acknowledgment that he or she will not vote until his or her eighteenth birthday, (5) acknowledgement that voter registration applications submitted electronically are otherwise considered registration by mail, and (6) a digital copy of applicants' drivers license or identicard signature must be obtained by the SOS from the DOL.

Voter registration application information for persons signing up to vote prior to 18 years of age is held in a pending status in the SOS database, and is exempt from public inspection and copying until the person is 18 years of age.

Felonies associated with inappropriate registration do not apply to persons 17 years old.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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