

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1513

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government, Elections & Information Technology

Title: An act relating to collecting youth voter registration sign up information.

Brief Description: Concerning the collection of youth voter registration sign up information.

Sponsors: Representatives Bergquist, Stambaugh, Frame, Hudgins, Sawyer, Slatter, Macri, Gregerson, Peterson, McBride, Doglio, Appleton, Fitzgibbon, Goodman, Tharinger, Farrell, Pollet, Ormsby, Dolan and Riccelli.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 2/3/17, 2/7/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes persons 16 and 17 years of age to sign up to vote.
- Requires social studies teachers to coordinate Temperance and Good Citizenship Day events.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Appleton, Gregerson and Pellicciotti.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Koster, Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Irwin and Kraft.

Staff: Megan Palchak (786-7105).

Background:

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency overseeing kindergarten through grade 12 public education in Washington. Under common school provisions, if the State Board of Education requires civics coursework, the content must

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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.

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.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature expresses intent to increase voter turnout by enabling eligible persons 16 years of age to preregister to vote. Persons 16 and 17 years of age may sign up to vote at the DOL, and all other locations, through electronic means. Persons signed up to vote may not vote until 18 years of age, and his or her name may not be added to the statewide voter registration database until he or she will be 18 years of age prior to the next election.

On Temperance and Good Citizenship Day, social studies teachers must coordinate a voter registration sign up event, with support from county auditors, as resources allow. Teachers must make voter sign up and registration available to students. The event must encourage student who will be 18 years of age the next election to vote.

The OSPI and the SOS must distribute voter registration materials by December 1, annually. The OSPI must consult with the SOS to provide registration methods, and report annually on voter registration process.

Voter sign up records are exempt from public inspection and copying.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2018.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The current voting process is inaccessible to youth. Some have to be in the right place at the right time to gain information about deadlines. Since "motor voter," or registering to vote at the Department of Licensing, is the most popular form of voter registration, and most drivers licenses are obtained at 16 years of age, implementing 16-year-old voter registration sign up at the DOL makes sense. Preregistration in schools allows students to connect lessons to society. County auditors are concerned about communication to youth voters, mobility, and associated administrative burden. The purpose of voter registration is to prevent fraud. There may be opportunity through rule making and timing of voter registration cards. The Legislature needs to decide on a 16- or 17-year-old sign-up requirement, rather than a 16- and 17-year-old sign up, to avoid a two-tier system. Rules that apply to adults registered to vote should not apply to minors.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The Secretary of State supports sign up for persons age 17, and amended language articulating the requirement broadly. There is an existing process for 17 year olds who will be 18 by the next election. This bill will add structure to the existing process.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Julie Anderson; James Paribello, Win/Win Network; Nancy Sipara, League of Women Voters of Washington; and Alisha Agard, The Washington Bus.

(Other) David Elliot, Office of the Secretary of State

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.