

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6190

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

Title: An act relating to allowing the use of a signature stamp for voting purposes.

Brief Description: Allowing the use of a signature stamp for voting purposes.

Sponsors: Senators Hunt and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 2/21/18 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits a person who is physically disabled to sign a voter registration oath or ballot declaration with a signature stamp, if certain requirements are met.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

Voter Registration Applications.

A person must complete an application in order to register to vote. The application requires the applicant to provide certain information, such as:

- name;
- residential address, and mailing address if it is different from their residential address;
- date of birth;
- driver's license or state identification card number, or the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number; and

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- an indication that the applicant is a United States citizen.

The applicant must also sign an oath on the application form that the information provided is true and that the applicant is qualified to vote. The Secretary of State maintains a statewide voter registration database that includes information of every registered voter.

Ballot Declarations.

Each active registered voter is issued certain voting material for an election which includes a mail ballot and a declaration that the voter must sign to swear that the voter is qualified to vote and has not voted in any other jurisdiction for that election.

Each county canvassing board, or its designated representatives, processes ballot materials returned by a voter. The signed declaration is examined before the ballot is processed and the signature on the ballot materials must be verified as the same as the signature in the voter's registration file. A person who signed a voter registration form by making a mark or can no longer sign their name, must be identified by another registered voter when voting at a voting center.

Summary of Bill:

Voter Registration Applications.

A voter registration applicant who cannot sign their name due to a physical disability may sign the oath on the voter registration form by either making their mark or using a signature stamp. A signature by mark or stamp must be accompanied by the signatures of two witnesses.

Ballot Declarations.

A voter unable to sign their name on an election ballot due to a physical disability may use a signature stamp. If a person is voting at a voting center, a voter who signed their voter registration by mark or stamp or can no longer sign their name must be identified by two witnesses. If a person is not voting at a voting center, a signature stamp must be accompanied by the signatures of two witnesses. If the voter did not use the signature stamp on their voter registration application, the voter must notify the county auditor and submit an image of the stamp for verification purposes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This proposal comes from an individual who is blind and expressed hardship in finding where to sign on a ballot, and the concern that their signature cannot be recognized. This person suggested the ability to use a signature stamp with a verification process. The stamp would be a unique signature that would not be able to be passed around. The requirement to have two witnesses swear on the ballot that the person is who they say they are provides additional security measures. The bill promotes consistency in election procedures throughout the state and ensures accessibility and dignity for disabled voters. "Physical disability" is not defined and should instead say "disability."

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Hunt, prime sponsor; David Elliot, Office of the Secretary of State; and David Lord, Disability Rights Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.