

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5110

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
State Government  
State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections, January 12, 2018  
Transportation, January 29, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to enhancing youth voter registration.

**Brief Description:** Enhancing youth voter registration. [**Revised for 1st Substitute:** Collecting youth voter registration sign up information.]

**Sponsors:** Senators Billig, Hunt, Liias, Palumbo, Kuderer, Saldaña, Pedersen, Darneille, Carlyle, Keiser, Mullet and Wellman.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State Government: 1/25/17.  
State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/12/18 [DP-WM, DNP].  
Transportation: 1/23/18, 1/29/18 [DPS, w/oRec].

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill**

- Permits persons at least 16 years of age to register to vote.
- Prohibits adding a person to the voter rolls until such time as the person will be 18 years of age by the next election.
- Exempts voter registration application records of persons under 18 years of age from public disclosure requirements.

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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT**

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS**

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.  
Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Saldaña.

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*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.*

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.  
Signed by Senator Miloscia, Ranking Member.

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5110 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hobbs, Chair; Saldaña, Vice Chair; Chase, Cleveland, Dhingra, Liias, McCoy, Takko, Walsh, Wellman and Zeiger.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Member; O'Ban and Sheldon.

**Staff:** Bryon Moore (786-7726)

**Background:** Voter Registration Procedures. A person must be a United States citizen and at least 18 years of age on or before the next election to register to vote. Voters may register electronically, through the mail, or in person at various locations. The National Voter Registration Act requires states to provide residents the opportunity to register to vote for federal elections at certain state agencies.

In response to that requirement, Washington adopted the Motor Voter Act, requiring that the Department of Licensing (DOL) provide voter registration services. Before issuing an original license, identification card, or license renewal, the licensing agent must determine if the applicant wants to register to vote or transfer an existing voter registration. If so, the agent provides the applicant with a voter registration form with instructions, and records the applicant's request to register to vote. The person must provide the driver's licensing agent with information necessary to ensure correct identification and location of residence. Each driver's licensing facility in the state is required to send completed voter registration forms to the Secretary of State's (SOS) office.

In addition to DOL, the following agencies and programs offer voter registration:

- the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Community Services Division;
- the DSHS Aging and Long-Term Support Administration;
- the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
- the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration;
- the DSHS Aging and Disabilities Service Administration;
- the Department of Services for the Blind;
- the Health Care Authority; and
- the Health Benefits Exchange.

Voter Registration of Persons Under 18 Years of Age. Currently several states and Washington, D.C. permit individuals to register to vote before reaching 18 years of age, but provides that such persons are not eligible to participate in state elections and do not appear on voter registration lists until reaching 18 years of age. Persons may register to vote at 16 years of age in California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Rhode Island,

and Washington, D.C. Oregon permits 17-year-olds to register to vote. Georgia, Iowa, and Missouri permit voter registration six months before an individual's eighteenth birthday. In all state elections in those states, persons are not eligible to participate in an election until reaching 18 years of age.

Temperance and Good Citizenship Day. On January 16, or the preceding Friday if January 16 falls on a weekend, each public school observes Temperance and Good Citizenship Day. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must annually produce a program for teachers to use on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** Voter Registration of Persons Under 18 Years of Age. A person who is at least 16 years of age and who meets all other voter registration requirements may register to vote electronically, or at any location where voter registration is permitted, but may not be added to the state voter list until such time as the person will be 18 years of age by the next election. Information provided in a voter registration application by a person under 18 years of age is exempt from public disclosure and copying and inclusion on the jury source list until the person is added to the state voter list.

Temperance and Good Citizenship Day. Annually on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day, as resources allow, social studies teachers must coordinate voter registration events in each history or social studies class attended by high school seniors, with support from county auditors. Teachers must make sign up and registration available to all students. Events must encourage students who will be 18 years of age by the next general election to register to vote online from the classroom. Paper registration forms must also be made available in the classroom.

Annually by December 1, OSPI must consult with the SOS to distribute youth voter registration materials. OSPI and the SOS must also provide registration methods that enable the electronic collection of information regarding the number of students registered to vote on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day, with a goal of 50,000 new registrations of 17 and 18-year olds annually. Beginning March 1, 2020, OSPI must report on yearly progress regarding distribution of youth voter materials, number of youths registered to vote by county, and recommendations to increase youth voter registration.

Other Provisions. The Class C felony regarding voter registration without legal qualification does not apply to persons under age 18 who sign up to register to vote. The statewide voter registration database must provide for the storage of pending voter registrations of persons who will turn 18 before the next general election. The bill is null and void unless funded in the omnibus transportation budget.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):** Provisions dealing with voter registration events in each history or social studies class for high school seniors is added. The requirement for OSPI to consult with the SOS to distribute youth voter registration materials is added. The bill is null and void unless funded in the omnibus transportation budget.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on June 30, 2019.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (State Government):** *Testimony from 2017 Regular Session.* PRO: We currently exclude young voters from the easiest way to register to vote - motor voter. A person doesn't need to return to DOL until they turn 21 after getting a driver's license. DOL transactions are the only location institutionally where a person is asked to register to vote. This will give youth an opportunity to get involved in politics. Studies show getting involved in voting early leads to lifelong participation. Young people trying to make change miss out on having their voices heard unless barriers to participation are lowered. Participation in democracy is sacred. Sixteen years of age is when students start talking about voting. When students know they're registered to vote, their mentality shifts from passive to engaged. This bill follows the intent of the National Voter Registration Act. Voting is a fundamental right, and we have a duty to promote its exercise. Many young voters continue to use their parents' address, and parents can forward mail to their children.

OTHER: We believe this would be more successful if tied to a civic education component in schools. Data collected this way could be incorrect by the time it is two years old - students could move. We appreciate that implementation of the bill is tied to our effort to modernize voter registration systems.

**Persons Testifying (State Government):** PRO: Senator Andy Billig, Prime Sponsor; Alex Hur, WA Voting Justice Coalition; William Daley, Washington Community Acton Network; Alisha Agard, The Washington Bus; Mary Hall, WA State Association of County Auditors; Julie Wise, King County Elections Director; Elissa Goss, Washington Student Association; Vicki Christophersen, Ballard High School Capitol Classroom.

OTHER: Lori Augino, Office of the Secretary of State.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (State Government):** No one.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections):** No public hearing was held.

**Persons Testifying (State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections):** N/A.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections):** N/A.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute (Transportation):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This is simply about providing the opportunity for 16 or 17 year olds the right to preregister and increasing civic involvement. This is a minimal cost way to increase voter participation. The

preregistration as part of driver's license renewal will allow greater reach to all populations. This will strengthen democracy and empower students. The bill builds off of previous efforts.

**Persons Testifying (Transportation):** PRO: Senator Andy Billig, Prime Sponsor; David Elliott, Policy Director, Office of the Secretary of State; Emily Parzybok, Washington Voting Justice Coalition; Arne Nelson, Washington Student Association; Rosa Rice-Pelepko, Associated Students of Western Washington University.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Transportation):** No one.