
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

HB 1361

Brief Description: Concerning the timely mailing of ballots by county auditors.

Sponsors: Representatives Klippert and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Imposes a 24-hour deadline for county auditors to notify the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) that the auditor has mailed ballots to voters or that the auditor is unable to meet the statutory deadline.
- Requires the OSOS to contact a county auditor who has not mailed ballots to voters by three days after the statutory deadline to inquire about the reason for the delay and the date the auditor expects the ballots will be sent.

Hearing Date: 2/3/21

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

Washington elections are conducted by mail. The county auditor must mail ballots to each voter at least 18 days before each primary or election.

County auditors must certify to the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) the date that the ballots were mailed. If the ballots were not mailed timely, the auditor must notify the OSOS of the date that ballots will be mailed and the reason for the delay.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

An auditor's failure to mail ballots on time does not by itself provide a basis for an election contest or other legal challenge to the results of a primary or election.

Summary of Bill:

A deadline is imposed to require auditors to notify the OSOS within 24 hours after they have sent their ballots. If the ballots are not timely mailed at least 18 days before the election, the auditor must notify the OSOS within 24 of the reason for the delay and the date the ballots will be mailed. If the auditor has not provided this information to the OSOS by the Monday 15 days before the election, the OSOS must contact the county auditor to inquire about the reason for the delay and the date that the auditor expects the ballots will be sent.

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.