
**State Government Operations &
Accountability Committee**

HB 1753

Brief Description: Enhancing voter registration recordkeeping.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Nixon, Shabro, McDermott, Haigh, Hunt, Upthegrove, Moeller, Simpson, Sells and Linville; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits the use of a state identification card for voter registration.
- Requires that confirmation notices sent to verify addresses include a prepaid, pre-addressed return form.
- Compels the Secretary of state to check other state agency lists or data bases for the purpose of identifying felons.
- Repeals the provision to compensate certain counties for maintenance of voter registration records.

Hearing Date: 2/18/05

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) requires states to make changes to elections administration practices and provides federal funds for such purposes. Specifically, HAVA requires the creation of a statewide voter registration data base; provisional voting capabilities; a driver's license or Social Security number from an individual registering to vote; mail-in registration forms to include certain questions relating to citizenship and age; early disability access voting; the establishment of a local government grant program; and applying the administrative complaint procedures to elections. Statutory changes made to satisfy HAVA were enacted in 2004 but do not become effective until January 1, 2006.

To register to vote, an application must be submitted to the appropriate county auditor. At a minimum the application must include the applicant's name, residential address, date of birth, and a signature attesting that the information provided is true.

A Washington State identification card will be accepted for purposes of registering to vote.

The Secretary of State (Secretary) must verify that either the driver's license number or the last four digits of the social security number match information maintained by the Washington Department of Licensing or the Social Security Administration. The Secretary must correspond with the applicant to resolve any discrepancy, and the applicant must respond with the requested information within thirty days, otherwise the Secretary must forward the application to the appropriate county auditor for document storage.

If the information on the application is complete, the applicant is considered to be registered to vote as of the date of mailing of the original voter registration application.

A qualified elector may register to vote or change his or her registration address in person in the office of the county auditor or at a specified voter registration location.

If a voter is convicted of a felony, he or she loses the right to vote. Cancellation of a felon's registration is done by the county auditor upon notification of such a conviction by the state or federal court. Effective January 1, 2006, a felon's registration may also be cancelled through a process of comparing a list of known felons provided by the Department of Corrections with the statewide voter registration list.

Summary of Bill:

The bill adds the provision that if an applicant does not have a state identification card, as well as a driver's license or social security number, a unique voter registration number will be assigned.

Requests for confirmation of a registered voter's address must include a postage prepaid, pre-addressed return form.

If the applicant's driver's licence or social security number does not match the information maintained by the Department of Licensing or the Social Security Administration, the applicant has 45 days, rather than 30, to respond to correspondence from either the Secretary or the county auditor. If the applicant does not respond in that time, he or she will not be registered to vote.

The bill clarifies that voter registration application forms collected by persons or organizations may be sent either to the Secretary or the county auditor and the effective date of those registrations is the date they are received by the Secretary or the county auditor.

When conducting a periodic comparison of the Department of Corrections felon list, the Secretary must also check other state agency lists and data bases, as appropriate, to screen for felons.

The provision to compensate counties with less than 10,000 registered voters for maintenance of the voter registration records on electronic data processing systems is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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