

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5663

As of February 19, 2007

Title: An act relating to electronic voter registration.

Brief Description: Providing for electronic voter registration.

Sponsors: Senators Oemig, Kline, Fairley, Keiser and Kohl-Welles; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/15/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Amy Van Horn (786-7784)

Background: Voter registration applications are available online at a number of sites, including the Secretary of State's web site and various county auditor web sites. However, the applicant cannot actually apply online. Rather, the applicant must print the application and mail or deliver it to the county auditor or the Secretary of State.

Summary of Bill: A person may submit an electronic voter registration application through the Secretary of State's web site. Applicants must have a Washington State driver's license or Washington State identification card. For each electronic application, the Secretary of State must obtain a digital copy of the applicant's driver's license or identification card signature from the Department of Licensing.

Electronic voter registration applicants must attest that the information provided on the application is true, and must agree to the use of the driver's license or identification card signature for voter registration purposes. The application is otherwise treated as a registration by mail.

The Secretary of State may employ additional security measures to ensure the accuracy and integrity of electronic voter registration applications.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2008.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The ability to register to vote online would make registering much easier for many people, including military personnel serving overseas, students who move a lot, and people with disabilities. Young adults use the Internet to do a great deal of their public business, including paying bills and registering for classes. The ability to register to vote online would encourage young people to vote. Online registration would cost the agency less money than paper registration. All of the other methods of registering to vote would still be available. An identical bill passed unanimously out of the House of Representatives committee.

CON: This bill would make fraud easier. Anyone who finds a stolen ID card or license plate could register. By requiring a driver's license or ID card to register to vote online, we would be creating a separate standard to be able to register to vote online.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Oemig, prime sponsor; Sam Reed, Secretary of State of Washington; Sasha Sleiman, Washington Student Lobby.

CON: Merton Cooper, citizen.