
State Government Committee

HB 2333

Brief Description: Regulating voter registration applications.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero, McDermott, Schmidt and Woods; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regulating the distribution, printing, and collection of voter registration applications.

Hearing Date: 1/25/02

Staff: Bree Ramage (786-7617).

Background:

In Washington, a qualified person may register to vote in many locations. Voter registration applications are available at the county auditor, in many public buildings, when applying for a driver's license or identification card, and when applying for public services.

State law does not regulate the means by which a third party may distribute or print voter registration forms, but it does regulate other activities. For example, a person or organization collecting voter registration application forms must transmit the forms to the Secretary of State or a designee at least once weekly. Persons are prohibited from offering to pay or accepting payment to register voters, where payment is based on a fixed amount of money per voter registration.

State law also restricts what voter registration information is available to the public. Information available to the public includes: the voter's name, gender, voting record, date of registration, and registration number. A voter's address and political jurisdiction within which a voter resides is available except to the extent that it is exempt from public inspection under the public records law.

Summary of Bill:

The distribution of voter registration applications by any person, organization or association must comply with the following:

- no return address may be used other than the office of the secretary of state or the county auditor; and
- no postal permit or meter may be used to pay the postage for the return of the individual voter registration forms.

Persons printing voter registration forms may not include any kind of advertising, candidate statements, ballot measures or political positions.

A person or organization collecting voter registration applications has a duty to protect voter privacy. Voter registration forms that have been signed by a prospective voter may not be copied, nor may the information contained in it be recorded before official processing by county or state voter registration officials.

Rulemaking Authority: No express authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.