



# Representative Chris Tuck

Alaska State Legislature  
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## MEMORANDUM

Date: May 6, 2021

To: Members of the State Affairs Committee

From: Mike Mason, Office of Rep. Chris Tuck

**RE: Gail Fenumiai, Director of the Division of Elections., responses to questions raised in the April 29, 2021, House State Affairs Committee meeting.**

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**Question:** Rep. Story asked about the provision in House Bill 164 calling for the Division of Elections to send out by-mail absentee ballots with a postage-paid return envelope? Specifically, Rep. Story asked how the state is charged for postage-paid return envelopes?

**Answer:** The state would only pay postage for ballots returned by the voter. The \$66,600 in the fiscal note is just a ballpark to give everyone an idea of a cost. It is not set in stone. It is based on the average of returned ballots from the 2018 and 2020 election cycles.

**Question:** Rep. Kaufman asked if the Division of Elections can use unpaid volunteers to work elections?

**Answer:** If someone wants to volunteer their time, we will take them, and we have had a few volunteers in the past. However, we have a very difficult time finding workers even when they know they can get paid. Finding 2,500 election workers for an election as just volunteers without

pay would be very difficult. Election workers are expected to attend training conducted by the state.

**Question:** Rep. Vance asked about curing ballots cast on election day? Rep. Vance brought up a scenario she says occurred in Homer where voters were inadvertently given two ballots that were stuck together. Under the scenario she outlined, a voter filled out the front part of one ballot and then filled out the backside of a second ballot because the ballots were on paper that was stuck together or difficult to separate.

**Answer:** I do not have firsthand knowledge that this happened. If this were to happen at a polling place, a voter could request a new ballot from the election worker, and the first ballot would be spoiled. Voters who vote by mail do not receive two ballots.

**Question:** Rep. Vance asked a question regarding last year's data breach of information from those who applied online for an absentee ballot. Rep. Vance asked about the Division of Elections response to the data breach and what kind of stepped-up security measures are being used?

**Answer:** There is daily log monitoring and analysis taking place. The Division of Elections underwent extensive testing conducted by the Department of Homeland Security/Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

**Question:** Rep. Vance posed a question regarding a voter's party affiliation being listed on an absentee ballot envelope. Are party affiliations listed anywhere on an absentee ballot?

**Answer:** A voter's party affiliation is not listed on the ballot. A voter's party affiliation code is printed on the voter's envelope. This assists the division

when preparing ballots for mailing to ensure that the voter receives the correct ballot choice in a primary election. With the passage of 19AKBE, there will no longer be a need to have this information appear on the ballot envelope.

**Question:** Rep. Eastman brought up a scenario in his district where he alleges that new election workers were purposely looking at people's actual ballots and noting who they voted for in two separate precincts. Was such an incident ever reported to the Division of Elections?

**Answer:** I have no firsthand knowledge of this alleged incident. When a person votes, they are provided with a secrecy sleeve to place their ballot inside after voting to carry the ballot to the precinct scanner where the voter inserts the ballot into the scanner.

**Question:** Rep. Eastman asked if the number of polling places has increased based on increased population?

**Answer:** The number of polling places has steadily been in the 435-450 range over the past 20 years. Polling places are based on the number of precincts that are derived during the 10-year redistricting process.

**Question:** Rep. Eastman asked if people have to travel farther to vote in some parts of the state than in years past?

**Answer:** There is a polling place in each precinct. Polling places are selected by the regional offices taking into consideration accessibility and location. I do not know specifically the distance people have to travel in each precinct to get to their polling place.

**Question:** Rep. Eastman asked what remedy a voter would have if they log onto the free access system called for in the bill to see whether a ballot was counted

and find incorrect information. For instance, if an absentee ballot was rejected and the voter did not cast an absentee ballot.

**Answer:** The division would immediately look into the situation to determine what might have happened.