



# Municipality of Anchorage

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## Anchorage Assembly Chair Constant

February 13, 2025

Dear Honorable Members of the House State Affairs Committee,

In my role as Chair of the Anchorage Assembly, I am writing to provide feedback on HB 43, "An Act relating to elections; relating to voters; relating to the crime of unlawful interference with voting; and providing for an effective date."

The Assembly has not taken an official position on this bill, but our Elections Team has reviewed it and did not find anything that would adversely affect Anchorage elections. I would however like to request a few amendments to the State Elections statutes through HB 43 bill that would bring more accuracy to Alaska's voter rolls. These amendments have been an adopted legislative priority for the Municipality of Anchorage since 2022.

Before I share our requested amendments, I want to thank the sponsors, Representatives Schrage, Edgmon, Burke and Holland for your leadership on this issue, and to the full committee for taking the time to listen and learn more about election issues. It is very important that we all work together to ensure that Alaskans have full access to participate in elections and that our elections are transparent, accurate and secure, so I applaud you for your efforts to strengthen Alaska's elections.

Anchorage's requests for changes to Alaska Statutes Title 15 focus on voter registration and maintaining better accuracy in our voter rolls. While Anchorage maintains its own independent election system, like all communities in Alaska, we rely on the State to maintain the voter registration list. Alaska has a robust and successful registration process, however, it can currently take eight years to remove a voter from the rolls if voters are not proactive. The result of having outdated voter rolls is that Anchorage unnecessarily spends money to mail ballots to people who have long since left the state, which leads to artificially low voter turnout counts and large numbers of returned ballots – up from 15,812 in the 2022 regular election to 20,120 in 2024.

Fortunately, there are systems and tools that can easily be put into place to maintain accurate voter rolls. Our recommendations are as follows:

- Amend AS 15.07.130b by shortening the period in which a voter, whose mail is returned as undeliverable and who is not responding to the Division's efforts to make contact, from four years to two years to remain on the voter registration list; e.g., "If a registered voter has not, within the preceding four two calendar years, contacted the division and has neither voted nor appeared to vote in a local, regional school board, primary, special,

or general election during the last four two calendar years and a notice sent to the voter under (a) of this section was returned as undeliverable, the voter shall be advised by a notice sent by forwardable mail to the voter's last known address that registration will be inactivated unless the voter responds to the notice no later than 45 days after the date of the notice sent under this section. The director shall maintain on the master register the name of a voter whose registration is inactivated. The director shall cancel a voter's inactive registration in accordance with the procedures set out in 42 U.S.C. 1973gg-6 (sec. 8, National Voter Registration Act of 1993) after the second next general election that occurs after the registration becomes inactive if the voter does not contact the division or vote or appear to vote.

(d) (3) that the voter's registration will be cancelled if the voter does not contact the division during, or vote or appear to vote in an election held during, the period beginning on the date of the notice and ending on the day after the last day of the fourth second calendar year that occurs after the date of notice; and"

- Amend AS 15.07.130 by adding a new section that directs the Director to cancel a voter's registration when notification from the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) or other similar agency indicates a voter has registered to vote in a different state, e.g., "When the Director obtains notification from Electronic Registration Information Center, or other similar agency that assists states with the accuracy of voter rolls, that a voter has registered to vote in a different state, that voter's registration shall promptly be canceled."
- Amend AS 15.07.120 by adding a new section that directs the Director to cancel a voter's registration when notification from the United States Postal Service that a voter has completed a National Change of Address form and has indicated that the voter wants to change the voter's registration to a new state, e.g., "When the Director obtains notification that a voter has requested to change their voter registration to a new state via the National Change of Address form, or similar United States Postal Service product, that voter's registration shall promptly be canceled."
- Amend AS 15.07.130 by adding a new section that provides that a voter registering in a new state is prima facie evidence that the voter no longer wants to be registered to vote in Alaska, e.g., "A voter registering in a new state is prima facie evidence that the voter no longer wants to vote in Alaska and the Director shall promptly cancel that voter's registration."

We understand that there are concerns about cleaning voter rolls of people who are currently living in Alaska and eligible to vote, but the process we propose really focuses on people who have been confirmed to have moved out of state (such as registering to vote in another state) and still allows for a person with unknown status to be on the list for six years after they have

last voted. And, if they show up to vote at any point during those years, they will be given a ballot and their vote will be counted.

We know that you are just at the beginning of the process to review this bill, but we sincerely hope that you will consider making amendments to bring more accuracy to Alaska's voter rolls. While they will especially benefit vote at home communities, these changes will benefit the entire Alaskan election system, by making our election rolls more accurate and up-to-date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Constant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Assembly Chair Christopher Constant