

Joe Hayes

From: Susan A [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 3:08 PM
To: Senate State Affairs
Cc: Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: SB 52

Susan Allmeroth Two Rivers
Strongly oppose
Violates Law
Add vote curing

Since we want to change voting laws let's talk about what is wrong with this entire section.

Senate Bill No. 52 proposes several changes to absentee voting, early voting, and the counting of ballots in Alaska. Here are some potential problems with this bill:

Timing of Ballot Counting (Sections 1 and 2):

- The bill proposes to eliminate the prohibition on tabulating ballots before 8:00 p.m. on election day and instead allow tabulation to begin at 11:59 p.m. on election night. This could lead to confusion and inconsistencies in how votes are counted across different precincts. The delay in counting could also contribute to a delay in reporting results, leading to public distrust or frustration, especially if results are needed quickly. Additionally, for remote areas where ballots are delayed due to weather or mechanical issues (as noted in Section 3), this change could increase uncertainty about when results will be finalized.

Absentee Ballots Postmarked on Election Day (Sections 6, 7, and 11):

- By emphasizing that absentee ballots must be postmarked on or before election day to be counted, the bill places a significant burden on voters who rely on mail services. In rural or remote areas, where mail services are less reliable, this could disenfranchise voters who sent their ballots timely but had them delayed in transit. Military personnel and overseas voters could be particularly affected by this, as they may face delays in mail services and the counting of their ballots. The 10-day or 15-day post-election deadlines for receiving absentee ballots (depending on the election) could be too restrictive in certain circumstances, especially if there are postal delays.

Early Voting Restrictions (Section 4):

- The bill reduces the period for early voting, proposing to end it the Saturday before the election rather than allowing it to continue through Election Day. This could disenfranchise voters who, due to work, personal, or travel reasons, need the option to vote early but are unable to do so before the cut-off. In rural or remote communities, where residents may have to travel long distances to early voting locations, reducing the early voting window could be particularly problematic. It could also disproportionately affect voters who are deployed in the military or otherwise unavailable on Election Day.

Absentee Ballot Storage (Section 3):

- While storing absentee ballots in a transparent, secured container and using video surveillance is a good measure for transparency, it could create logistical challenges. For instance, remote communities may have difficulties maintaining the required infrastructure (such as video surveillance equipment), and ensuring that ballots are properly stored until

they are delivered could be complicated in areas with unreliable weather or transportation systems. This may also introduce the potential for delays in getting ballots to the director on time.

Potential Voter Disenfranchisement (Sections 9 and 11):

- The stricter rules on absentee ballot qualifications and delivery deadlines (Sections 6, 9, and 11) could prevent eligible voters from having their ballots counted. For example, requiring absentee ballots to be received by close of business on election day or within 10-15 days after the election could be especially detrimental to voters in remote areas, military personnel, or overseas voters who face unreliable mail services or long postal delays. Furthermore, the additional documentation requirements for absentee ballots could create barriers for voters who may not have immediate access to the necessary forms of identification or proof of residence.

Impact on Military and Overseas Voters (Sections 6 and 8):

- The bill's provisions regarding absentee ballots could disproportionately affect military and overseas voters. These voters often rely on extended deadlines for their ballots to be counted and the bill's tighter post-election deadlines could undermine their participation. The requirement for absentee ballots to be mailed in advance also disregards the possibility that service members may not have reliable access to postal services.

General Election and Special Election Confusion (Sections 7, 10, and 13):

- The bill introduces different rules for absentee ballots depending on whether they are related to general, special, or primary elections. This could create confusion among voters who may not fully understand the varying deadlines and requirements. Additionally, the rapid certification of absentee ballots within a short window could potentially lead to errors or oversight, especially if absentee ballots are not fully reviewed due to time constraints.

This bill may pose several challenges, especially for remote, rural voters, and military personnel, who rely on mail services and extended deadlines for absentee voting. The changes to early voting, absentee ballot handling, and counting times could lead to confusion, disenfranchisement, and logistical challenges that disproportionately affect these groups. These changes would require careful consideration of how to balance efficiency with accessibility for all voters.

This bill also amends several sections under AS 14.08 relating to Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) elections to change REAA elections from being held every year to being held every other year. For regional school board members, terms of office would change from one, two, and three-year terms to staggered four-year terms. Repeals the statutory provisions relating to automatic voter registration (AVR) through the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) application process. Amends AS 15.20.030 relating to the preparation of ballots, envelopes, and other material to provide for postage- paid, pre-addressed return envelopes for absentee ballots. Amends AS 15.20.800(a) relating to voting by mail by adding a new paragraph to allow the director to conduct an election by mail for any community with a population of 750 or less. Amends AS 15.20.064(a) relating to early voting to end early voting five days before Election Day.

Amends AS 15.58.010 relating to the official election pamphlet (OEP) to delete the requirement that a copy of the OEP be mailed to every voter household.

There are several potential problems with these suggestions, particularly for remote, rural voters and those serving in the military. Let's break them down:

REAA elections every other year:

- Problem: For rural and remote voters, reducing the frequency of REAA elections could be problematic. In areas where voter turnout is low and elections are spaced further apart, voters might feel disconnected or disengaged from the electoral process. Additionally, if local issues arise that require immediate attention, waiting two years for an election might delay necessary responses.

Repealing Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) through PFD:

- Problem: AVR through the PFD is particularly important for rural voters in Alaska, where access to registration services can be limited. Removing this system could lead to a decrease in voter registration, especially in remote areas where people might not have easy access to government offices or the internet. Military personnel who may be deployed or stationed far from their home state could also lose a streamlined method of voter registration.

Postage-paid, pre-addressed return envelopes for absentee ballots:

- Problem: While the suggestion to provide postage-paid, pre-addressed return envelopes for absentee ballots is generally beneficial, there could be challenges ensuring that remote and rural voters are still able to effectively access these materials in a timely manner. The logistical difficulties of mailing materials to rural areas with fewer postal services could delay ballots and potentially affect the integrity of the voting process.

Voting by mail in communities of 750 or fewer:

- Problem: Allowing elections by mail for smaller communities (750 or fewer people) may be an efficient way to streamline voting, but it could also disenfranchise those who lack reliable mail delivery or face other challenges in remote areas (such as those serving in the military abroad). Furthermore, some remote communities may not have the resources to effectively manage a mail-in system, leading to issues with miscommunication or lost ballots.

Ending early voting five days before Election Day:

- Problem: Reducing the window for early voting could disproportionately affect those who live in remote areas, including rural voters and military personnel, who may have to travel long distances or deal with unpredictable weather or logistical challenges. Additionally, military personnel might have unpredictable schedules or be stationed far away, making the shorter early voting period less accessible.

Eliminating the official election pamphlet (OEP) requirement:

- Problem: The OEP serves as a crucial resource, particularly for voters in remote and rural areas who may not have access to extensive online resources or local news outlets. Removing this pamphlet requirement could make it harder for voters to make informed decisions, especially those who rely on print materials for election information. For military personnel deployed overseas, access to digital resources may also be limited, making the pamphlet an essential tool.

Overall, these suggestions could inadvertently make voting more difficult for remote, rural voters, and military personnel by reducing access to registration, cutting down early voting opportunities, and eliminating key resources that help voters stay informed. These changes would need to be carefully considered and balanced with measures to ensure that all voters, regardless of their location or circumstances, can participate fully in the democratic process.

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This bill may pose several challenges, especially for remote, rural voters, and military personnel, who rely on mail services and extended deadlines for absentee voting. The changes to early voting, absentee ballot handling, and counting times could lead to confusion, disenfranchisement, and logistical challenges that disproportionately affect

these groups. These changes would require careful consideration of how to balance efficiency with accessibility for all voters.

In fact several provisions in Senate Bill No. 52 may potentially conflict with federal laws that govern absentee voting, military and overseas voter rights, and election administration. Here are some key federal laws that might be violated:

1. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)

- Key provisions: UOCAVA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1973ff to 1973ff-6, is designed to ensure that military members and overseas citizens can vote in federal elections. UOCAVA mandates that absentee ballots for military and overseas voters must be sent at least 45 days before the election and counted even if they are received after Election Day, as long as they are postmarked by Election Day.

Potential violations in SB 52:

- Absentee Ballot Deadlines (Section 6): SB 52 requires absentee ballots to be received by close of business on Election Day or within a short period after the election, which could violate UOCAVA's more lenient deadlines for military and overseas voters. UOCAVA allows for ballots from these voters to be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day, even if received after Election Day, up to 10 days (for primaries) or 15 days (for general elections).
- Mail Service (Section 7): The bill's provision that absentee ballots must be postmarked by Election Day and received by the close of business that same day could conflict with UOCAVA, which requires a more flexible window for overseas and military ballots, recognizing the realities of delayed mail from these areas.

2. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

- Key provisions: HAVA, 52 U.S.C. § 21081, addresses election administration and mandates standards for absentee voting, including ensuring accessibility and the use of voter-identification procedures.

Potential violations in SB 52:

- Absentee Ballot Identification Requirements (Section 11): SB 52 imposes strict identification requirements for absentee ballots, which could undermine the goal of ensuring that all eligible voters can participate. For example, HAVA requires that states ensure accessible and uniform standards for absentee voting but does not impose overly burdensome identification requirements, especially for absentee ballots sent by mail. Overly strict voter identification for absentee ballots could potentially violate the spirit of HAVA, which aims to prevent disenfranchisement.

3. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA)

- Key provisions: The VRA, 52 U.S.C. §§ 10301 to 10314, prohibits discrimination in voting practices based on race, color, or membership in a language minority group. This includes ensuring equal access to voting opportunities for all eligible voters, including those in remote areas.

Potential violations in SB 52:

- Impact on Remote Voters (Sections 3, 6, and 9): By shortening early voting periods and requiring that absentee ballots be received by stricter deadlines, SB 52 could disproportionately impact voters in remote, rural areas, or military personnel, who may face delays in mail delivery. This could lead to a form of disenfranchisement, which may disproportionately affect certain communities, thus potentially violating the VRA by creating undue barriers to voting for historically marginalized groups.

4. The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)

- Key provisions: The NVRA, 52 U.S.C. §§ 20501 to 20511, mandates that states facilitate voter registration, including ensuring the right to vote by mail and prohibiting barriers to voter registration.

Potential violations in SB 52:

- Absentee Voting Accessibility (Sections 6 and 7): NVRA aims to ensure that absentee voting is accessible to all eligible voters. By imposing stricter deadlines for absentee ballots, particularly for those mailed from overseas or military personnel, the bill could make absentee voting more difficult for voters covered under the NVRA.

5. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)

- Key provisions: FVAP assists military and overseas citizens with voting in federal elections. It provides guidance and resources to ensure absentee ballots from military and overseas voters are counted and processed properly.

Potential violations in SB 52:

- Absentee Ballot Deadlines (Section 6): The bill's deadline for absentee ballots to be received by close of business on Election Day or shortly after may not provide enough time for ballots from military personnel and overseas citizens to be processed and counted according to FVAP requirements, which allow for longer processing times.

Conclusion:

The provisions in SB 52 that restrict absentee ballot deadlines, early voting periods, and impose strict identification requirements for absentee ballots could potentially violate federal laws, especially the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), which protects military and overseas voters' right to vote, and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which ensures fair and accessible voting practices. Additionally, there could be concerns regarding the Voting Rights Act (VRA), which mandates equal access to voting, particularly for remote and marginalized voters. The bill would need to be carefully reviewed to ensure compliance with these federal laws and avoid disenfranchisement of eligible voters.

Now let's discuss how it affects our hosts to this great frontier.

Senate Bill No. 52 could have significant implications for remote Alaska Native villages, many of which are located in geographically isolated areas with limited infrastructure and services. These villages face unique challenges when it comes to voting, and the provisions in this bill could exacerbate some of those challenges. Here are a few key ways the bill could affect Alaska Native villages:

1. Absentee Ballot Deadlines (Sections 6, 7, and 11)

- Challenges in Mail Service: Many remote Alaska Native villages rely on air travel or other limited postal services to receive mail. Given the remote locations, mail can be delayed due to weather conditions, mechanical issues, or other logistical barriers. The bill's strict deadlines for absentee ballots—requiring them to be received by close of business on Election Day or within a very short window after the election—could make it impossible for ballots from these villages to be counted, even if they were mailed on time but delayed in transit.
- Impact on Voter Turnout: Alaska Native voters in remote villages might be disproportionately affected by these deadlines, as their ballots could be rejected due to late arrival. This could lead to disenfranchisement, especially in villages with less reliable mail service or where there are fewer opportunities to travel to polling places.

2. Early Voting Restrictions (Section 4)

- **Limited Access to Voting Locations:** In many remote villages, residents may have limited access to polling locations or early voting sites. The bill's reduction in the early voting window could create additional barriers for Alaska Native voters, particularly if they need to travel long distances to vote. In some villages, residents might only be able to vote early due to travel constraints, and shortening the early voting period could mean they miss the opportunity to vote altogether.

- **Travel and Weather Barriers:** Many remote villages face harsh weather conditions that make travel to polling stations difficult or impossible, especially during the winter months. Shortened early voting periods could limit opportunities for Alaska Native villagers to vote if they are unable to reach the voting locations due to weather or logistical challenges.

3. Absentee Ballot Handling and Security (Section 3)

- **Logistical Issues:** The requirement to store absentee ballots in a transparent, secured container with video surveillance (as per Section 3) could create logistical issues in remote areas. Villages often lack the infrastructure or resources to implement such security measures, and this could lead to complications in ensuring the integrity of absentee ballots. Additionally, storing ballots for long periods in remote locations could be challenging if there are few local election officials and limited access to secure facilities.

- **Transparency and Trust:** While the goal is to maintain transparency, there may be concerns about whether the technology required for video surveillance is available or reliable in these villages. This could undermine trust in the election process, especially in communities with limited access to technology.

4. Staggered Voting Times and Delayed Results (Sections 1 and 2)

- **Delayed Results:** The bill's changes to when ballots can be tabulated and counted (Sections 1 and 2) could lead to delays in reporting election results. For remote villages that have limited access to communication infrastructure, these delays could exacerbate feelings of isolation or disconnect from the larger state and national election processes. The extended counting period could also raise concerns about transparency in how the results are handled in these remote communities.

- **Potential for Increased Confusion:** If the rules regarding when results can be reported are inconsistent, it could create confusion for Alaska Native voters in remote villages, who may not have access to up-to-date information about the election. This could impact voter confidence and turnout.

5. Potential Disenfranchisement of Alaska Native Voters (Overall Impact)

- **Reduced Voter Engagement:** The combined effect of stricter absentee ballot deadlines, reduced early voting periods, and challenges related to the secure handling and counting of ballots could lead to reduced voter participation among Alaska Native voters in remote villages. These voters may feel that the system is not accessible or responsive to their needs, which could discourage them from voting in future elections.

- **Impact on Rural and Indigenous Communities:** Historically, Alaska Native communities face barriers to voting that stem from geographic isolation, language barriers, and limited access to election resources. The bill's provisions, if not carefully adjusted to account for these realities, could further disenfranchise Alaska Native voters, who are already underrepresented in the electorate.

6. Cultural and Community Considerations

- **Timing and Traditions:** Voting in Alaska Native villages often involves community efforts, and culturally important events, such as gatherings or ceremonies, may conflict with the shortened voting periods. In remote areas, especially those with traditional ways of life, people may not always be aware of changes to voting timelines or procedures. This

lack of awareness, combined with logistical barriers, could further complicate the voting process for Alaska Native villagers.

- **Language and Accessibility:** Many Alaska Native communities speak indigenous languages, and while election materials may be available in English, language barriers could still exist. If the bill results in fewer resources or opportunities for language access, it could create further disenfranchisement for Alaska Native voters who are not fluent in English.

Conclusion:

SB 52, as currently written, could disproportionately affect remote Alaska Native villages by introducing voting deadlines and procedures that may not take into account the unique challenges these communities face, such as unreliable mail service, long distances to polling places, and harsh weather conditions. Alaska Native voters in these communities could be disenfranchised by strict absentee ballot deadlines, reduced early voting opportunities, and logistical challenges related to ballot handling and security. For these reasons, careful consideration of the needs of rural and indigenous communities is necessary to ensure that the bill does not exacerbate existing barriers to voting for Alaska Native villagers.

Senate Bill No. 52 in fact could potentially violate both state and federal laws, particularly with regard to absentee voting, the rights of military and overseas voters, and accessibility for rural and Alaska Native communities. Here's a breakdown of possible violations:

1. Violation of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)

- **Key Provisions:** UOCAVA mandates that absentee ballots from military and overseas voters must be sent at least 45 days before the election, and it allows these ballots to be counted as long as they are postmarked by Election Day and received within a set period after the election.

Potential Violations:

- **Absentee Ballot Deadlines (Sections 6, 7, and 11):** SB 52 includes provisions that require absentee ballots to be received by close of business on Election Day or shortly after, which could violate UOCAVA. Under UOCAVA, absentee ballots from military and overseas voters are permitted to arrive later than Election Day, as long as they are postmarked by Election Day and received within a defined period after the election (up to 10 days for primaries and 15 days for general elections).
- **Impact on Military and Overseas Voters:** The bill's stricter deadlines could lead to military and overseas absentee ballots being excluded from the vote count, which would be inconsistent with UOCAVA's protections for these voters.

2. Violation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

- **Key Provisions:** HAVA mandates that absentee voting must be accessible and secure. It also requires states to ensure that absentee voting is made available to all eligible voters and that procedures are uniform and non-discriminatory.

Potential Violations:

- **Absentee Voting Procedures (Sections 6, 7, and 11):** HAVA requires states to ensure that absentee voting is accessible and that no eligible voter is disenfranchised due to technicalities such as missed deadlines. By shortening absentee ballot deadlines for Alaska Native voters in remote villages, SB 52 could create undue barriers to voting for these populations, especially those facing long delays in mail delivery due to geographic isolation.
- **Inaccessible Voting for Remote Areas:** Many remote Alaska Native villages face difficulties accessing polling places, particularly in harsh weather conditions. Reducing early voting periods (Section 4) and imposing strict absentee voting

deadlines could disproportionately disenfranchise these voters, which could potentially violate HAVA's intent to provide uniform access to the voting process.

3. Violation of the Voting Rights Act (VRA)

- **Key Provisions:** The VRA, especially Section 2, prohibits voting practices that discriminate on the basis of race or language minority group status. It requires that all eligible voters have an equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process.

Potential Violations:

- **Disproportionate Impact on Alaska Native Voters:** Alaska Native voters in remote villages may be disproportionately affected by shortened absentee ballot deadlines, the lack of early voting options, and mail delivery issues. If these barriers disproportionately disenfranchise Alaska Native voters, it could be seen as a violation of Section 2 of the VRA, which prohibits practices that have a discriminatory effect on minority groups.
- **Language Access:** If the bill inadvertently reduces the availability of voting materials or assistance in native languages, this could also violate the VRA's provisions for language minorities, which require that voting materials be provided in the languages spoken by significant minority populations in certain areas.

4. Violation of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

- **Key Provisions:** The NVRA requires states to make voter registration and absentee voting accessible to all eligible voters, including those in remote and rural areas.

Potential Violations:

- **Absentee Voting Accessibility:** The bill's provisions regarding strict absentee ballot deadlines could disproportionately impact voters in rural and remote areas, including Alaska Native villages. This could be seen as a violation of the NVRA's intent to ensure that absentee voting is accessible and that no eligible voter is denied the right to vote due to logistical barriers.
- **Disenfranchisement of Rural Voters:** Remote Alaska Native communities often face additional barriers to voting, such as unreliable mail service or limited access to polling locations. The bill's potential to shorten voting windows and impose stricter deadlines could exacerbate these issues, leading to disenfranchisement and violating the NVRA's goal of ensuring all voters have access to the electoral process.

5. Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)

- **Key Provisions:** The FVAP is designed to help military and overseas voters participate in federal elections, and it outlines specific procedures for absentee voting for these groups.

Potential Violations:

- **Impact on Military and Overseas Voters:** Similar to UOCAVA, FVAP requires that absentee ballots from military and overseas voters be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day and received within the prescribed period. The bill's provisions shortening the deadlines for absentee ballots could potentially violate the FVAP's protections for military and overseas voters, leading to the exclusion of valid ballots.

6. Alaska State Laws and Constitutional Protections

- **Equal Protection:** Under the Alaska State Constitution, voters are entitled to equal protection under the law, which ensures that all voters have equal access to the voting process. By imposing voting barriers in remote communities—especially Alaska Native villages—the bill could be seen as violating this principle, as it would disproportionately affect certain groups, creating unequal voting opportunities for these voters.
- **Voting Accessibility for Remote Communities:** Alaska Native villages often face challenges in accessing polling places or receiving timely election materials. If the bill's provisions exacerbate these challenges by reducing early voting opportunities or imposing strict absentee ballot deadlines, it could be seen as violating state constitutional protections for voting accessibility.

Conclusion

Some provisions of SB 52—particularly those that shorten absentee ballot deadlines, limit early voting opportunities, and impose stricter identification and ballot delivery rules—could potentially violate federal laws such as UOCAVA, HAVA, and the Voting Rights Act, as well as state constitutional protections for equal access to voting. The bill's potential impact on Alaska Native communities and military and overseas voters raises concerns about disenfranchisement, which could lead to legal challenges. To avoid violating these laws, the bill may need to be revised to ensure that voting rights for all groups, especially those in remote areas, are adequately protected.

My recommendation is to add ballot curing instead. Here is why:

1. Ballot Curing (Correcting Signature Issues)

- **How It Works:** Ballot curing allows voters whose absentee ballots have been rejected due to issues like missing or mismatched signatures to correct the problem before the ballot is discarded. Election officials can contact the voter (through phone, email, or mail) and inform them about the signature issue. The voter would then be given a chance to submit the corrected signature or provide other identifying information, such as a photocopy of a valid ID.

Benefits:

- **Reduces Disenfranchisement:** Voters who may have missed the signature step or made a mistake can still have their votes counted.
- **Maintains Security:** The signature still serves as a way to verify voter identity, but voters are given a second chance to ensure their ballot counts.
- **Helps Remote Areas:** In Alaska Native villages or other remote areas, where mail and communication delays can be problematic, voters can still correct mistakes and avoid having their ballots disqualified.

2. Simplified Signature Verification Process

- **How It Works:** Instead of removing the signature requirement entirely, election officials can make the signature verification process more lenient or use alternative methods for verification. For instance, they could cross-check other identifying information (e.g., address, voter ID number) to verify the voter's identity.

Benefits:

- **Ensures Accuracy:** The signature requirement still serves as a safeguard against fraud, but the verification process can be less strict in cases of minor discrepancies.
- **Improves Access:** Voters who may have difficulty signing their names (e.g., due to age, disability, or language barriers) may still be able to vote, as long as their identity can be verified through other means.

- **More Flexibility:** For voters in isolated areas, this approach could allow election officials to accept ballots even if the signature is somewhat unclear, as long as other verification criteria are met.

3. Use of Voter Identification (ID) as a Backup

- **How It Works:** Voters whose absentee ballots are missing signatures can be allowed to submit a copy of their voter ID (e.g., driver's license, state-issued ID, or other forms of identification) to verify their identity and fix the issue. This can be done through a secure system (online, by fax, or by mail).

Benefits:

- **Ensures Identity Verification:** Voter ID can serve as a secondary method of identity verification in place of the signature, ensuring security while allowing more flexibility for voters who struggle with signing their names.
- **Reduces Barriers:** For voters who may have difficulty with signatures due to literacy or physical disabilities, this gives them another way to ensure their vote is counted.
- **Addresses Voter Mistakes:** If a voter forgets or makes an error in signing, they could resolve the issue by submitting an alternate form of verification without the need for a completely new ballot.

4. Provide Pre-Paid Return Envelopes with Signature Prompts

- **How It Works:** To ensure that voters don't forget to sign their absentee ballots, the state could provide pre-paid return envelopes that clearly indicate where the voter needs to sign. These envelopes could have large, visible prompts or checkboxes indicating the signature requirement.

Benefits:

- **Reduces Errors:** Voters are more likely to remember to sign their ballots if the envelope is specifically designed to remind them. This would reduce the number of ballots rejected due to missed signatures.
- **Streamlines the Process:** A simple fix could lead to fewer ballots being invalidated for minor reasons, without removing the signature requirement altogether.
- **Improves Access for Remote Voters:** Clear instructions and simple fixes can help reduce confusion, especially for voters in remote areas.

5. Extended Time Frame for Signature Correction

- **How It Works:** The state could extend the deadline for voters to correct any signature-related issues on their absentee ballots. This would give voters in remote areas extra time to remedy any issues, especially when delays in mail or communication might prevent them from addressing errors before the original deadline.

Benefits:

- **Increases Flexibility:** This approach would give voters more time to fix mistakes and ensure their votes are counted without the risk of the ballot being discarded.
- **Helps Remote Communities:** In Alaska Native villages and other remote regions, where mail delivery is often slow and unpredictable, extended time frames could be critical in ensuring ballots are counted.

- **Supports Military and Overseas Voters:** It could also assist military and overseas voters who may face delays due to international mail or other logistical challenges.

6. Provide Additional Voter Education

- **How It Works:** Implementing voter education programs, especially targeting remote areas, could help reduce mistakes like missing signatures. This can include clear, simple guides explaining how to properly complete absentee ballots, including the importance of signing.

Benefits:

- **Prevents Errors:** Educating voters on the absentee voting process, including the signature requirement, would reduce the likelihood of errors and ensure ballots are submitted correctly the first time.
- **Empowers Voters:** Voter education gives individuals the tools and knowledge to navigate the voting process confidently, reducing confusion and mistakes.

Conclusion:

Instead of completely removing the signature requirement, the above fixes aim to reduce the negative impact of missing signatures while still maintaining election integrity. These solutions, such as ballot curing, simplified signature verification, and providing clearer instructions or extra time for corrections, offer ways to make the voting process more accessible to remote voters, including those in Alaska Native villages, without compromising the security and validity of the vote.

The only changes we requested were a way to cure our ballots and the signatures to be removed, so that so many ballots were not throw out. However, what I now also have discovered that we need a way to remove unfit election directors and watchers that sit among us right now. We are amidst a hostile take over and we are here defend a sacred right. We will not back down and we will not give end. Instead of making it more difficult to vote, add ballot curing. You are not there to rig elections. You are there to ensure the elections are fair. I object strongly against both SB 52 and SB 70. They are potential federal and state violations and I not here to agree to any of them.

Thank you