



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI, CHAIR

CS for Senate Bill 64 (FIN) am

34-LS0153\L.A

Election Reform

Sectional Analysis

Section 1: clarifies the residency requirements to define a residence as a place where a voter has a reasonable and articulable plan to return to whenever they are absent and provides that the presumption that a voter's registered address is correct may be rebutted by evidence that the voter has established residency at a different location.

Section 2: adds tribal identification cards to the list of acceptable identification for voter registration in person and removes hunting or fishing licenses from the list.

Section 3: adds tribal identification cards to the list of acceptable identification for voter registration by mail and removes hunting or fishing licenses list.

Section 4: established that the Division of Elections (Division) may only use Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) applicant information shared by the Department of Revenue for voter registration and voter roll maintenance and requires the Division to submit annual reports to the Legislature detailing how this data has been used for list maintenance.

Section 5: requires the Division of Elections (Division) to send a single forwardable notice as part of voter list maintenance and adds additional categories of voters to receive notices.

Section 6: is conforming language to reflect the changes made in Section 5.

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Section 8: establishes that registering to vote through a Permanent Fund Dividend application is not considered contacting the Division for purposes of the voter roll clean-up statutes.

Section 9: requires the Division to conduct a regular review of the voter register and to hire an expert to conduct the review and submit a report to the Legislature.

Section 10: requires the director to develop a process for voters to cancel their registrations and require that instructions for how to cancel one's registration be prominently posted at polling places.

Section 11: requires the Division to notify the public and the Legislature of breaches of confidential elections data.

Section 12: creates a rural community liaison position in the Division.

Section 13: allows political parties, candidates, ballot measure, and ballot question campaigns to have observers at polling places and counting centers and clarifies that campaigns may have observers at all locations within a counting center where ballots are being reviewed or counted.

Section 14: repeals the requirement for the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC) to have offices in every senate district.

Section 15: establishes that the true source of a contribution supporting or opposing a ballot measure or question is the entity making the contribution.

Section 16: repeals required specifications for voting booths.

Section 17: is a conforming section reflecting the repealed language in Section 16.

Section 18: requires that notices be posted informing voters of language assistance available at precincts where it is required by federal law.

Section 19: adds tribal identification cards to the list of identifications voters may use at polling places, removes hunting and fishing licenses from the list, and clarifies that when a voter uses a utility bill, bank statement, check, or other government document as identification that the document must be dated within the previous 60 days.

Section 20: clarifying that, except for hand count precincts, the Division must include results for all rank levels on the precinct results.

Section 21: enacts new subsections related to unofficial results and ballot review data.

Subsection (b) requires the Division to release data for which ballots have been counted along with unofficial results.

Subsection (c) requires the Division to release data for count codes for absentee ballots each day ballots are reviewed.

Subsection (d) provides a definition of “count code.”

Section 22: repeals the requirement that poll worker compensation be set by regulation.

Section 23: allows candidates and ballot proposition campaigns to observe the State Review Board process and repeals language suggesting that observers can assist with the review process.

Section 24: requires the Division to adopt additional risk limiting audit procedures as part of the State Review Board process.

Section 25: requires that all absentee ballots include a postage-paid return envelope. It also requires that there is a space for recording the date that the voter executed the certificate.

Section 26: codifies security measures for special needs ballots.

Section 27: is a conforming change reflecting the changes made in Section 26.

Section 28: provides that special needs ballots may not be rejected because of errors made by poll workers or representatives.

Section 29: repeals the witness signature requirement for absentee ballots.

Section 30: states that a ballot received after the day of the election that is not postmarked or postmarked after the election may be counted if it is marked with a United States Postal Service tracking barcode that indicates it was mailed on or before the day of the election.

Section 31: adds tribal identification cards to the list of acceptable identification for a first-time voter who registered by mail or electronically who votes absentee and removes hunting or fishing licenses from the list.

Section 32: requires all absentee by-mail ballots to be received within 10 days of the election.

Section 33: allows voters to register to continue to receive absentee by mail ballots so long as the voter votes at least once every four years.

Section 34: allows absentee voting officials to transmit cover sheets for absentee ballot packages electronically.

Section 35: requires absentee ballot review to begin 12 days before the election.

Section 36: contains conforming amendments to reflect the repeal of the witness signature requirement the new tracking barcode provisions, and the changes to the list of acceptable identifications.

Section 37: requires the Division to adopt procedures for challenging ballot review decisions by regulation and that these regulations must provide a reasonable amount of time to submit a challenge.

Section 38: provides that ballots that are properly cured under the new statute shall be counted during the state review board process if they were not previously counted.

Section 39: enacts two new sections of statutes:

New AS 15.20.221 requires the division to establish a ballot tracking system to allow a voter to track the status of their absentee by-mail ballot.

New AS 15.20.222 provides for ballot curing for absentee ballots.

- Subsection (a) requires the division to notify voters if there is no signature on the envelope or if the voter did not provide a sufficient identifier of the process to cure their ballot.
- Subsection (b) requires that these notices must explain the need for a signature for verification purposes and include a form for the voter to provide their signature and copy of the identification.
- Subsection (c) provides that a ballot may be cured and counted if the voter returns the form, confirms that they did in fact vote, and provides a signature and copy of their identification.
- Subsection (d) provides that a ballot shall not be counted, and the director will refer the matter to the attorney general for investigation, if the voter indicates they did not in fact vote the ballot.

Section 40: repeals the requirement that ballots that arrived after the deadline for ballots to arrive be counted during a recount.

Section 41: requires that the director provide secure ballot drop boxes at every Division office, adopt regulations for security standards for drop boxes, and allows municipalities to provide drop boxes in accordance with regulations adopted by the Division.

Section 42: clarifies that the return postage for absentee by-mail ballots required by Section 26 does not violate the prohibition on giving a thing of value in exchange for a person voting.

Section 43: clarifies that intentionally opening or tampering with ballot envelopes without the permission of the Division and hacking or altering election machinery is covered by the crime of unlawful interference with an election.

Section 44: provides that an election official who knowingly discloses election results before the polls close commits the crime of election official misconduct in the first degree.

Section 45: requires the lieutenant governor to develop a cybersecurity program to defend the voter registration records kept by the division.

Section 46: prohibits undisclosed use of synthetic media in electioneering communications and allows persons defamed by election related synthetic media to sue for injunctive relief.

Section 47: codifies the settlement in ACLU of Alaska v. State of Alaska related to campaign signs along state highways.

Section 48: removes the requirement that reports filed with APOC be available at offices in every senate district and requires that they be available on APOC's website.

Section 49: clarifies that reports filed with APOC shall be available at the commission's offices and on their website.

Section 50: requires Redistricting Board members to file annual public official financial disclosures with APOC.

Section 51: requires PFD applications to include a prominent notice informing applicants of their right to opt out of registering to vote or updating their voter registration.

Section 52: requires online PFD applications to inform applicants of their right to opt out of registering to vote or updating their voter registration.

Section 53: requires the Department of Revenue to share certain information concerning PFD applications to the Division for the purpose of voter registration and voter roll maintenance.

Section 54: requires the Department of Revenue to develop security measures to protect that data being shared under Section 51.

Section 55: clarifies that the Redistricting Board is subject to the Open Meetings Act.

Section 56: repeals redundant language relating to poll watchers and PFD applicant data sharing.

Section 57: requires the division to provide a report to the legislature by November 1, 2026, with recommendations for expanding early voting in rural communities and low-income neighborhoods.

Section 58: states that Sections 41-43 only applies to offenses committed after the effective date of this act.

Section 59: provides a July 1, 2026 effective date for this bill.