

Senate Rules Committee
Senator Bill Wielechowski, Chair

SB 64

Election Reform

Updated May 15, 2025



SB 64 is a Comprehensive Election Reform Package

Cleans up Alaska's voter rolls

Removes barriers to voting

Faster and more transparent results reporting

Ballot tracking barcodes for absentee ballots

Bans the use of undisclosed deepfakes to influence elections

Additional provisions to modernize Alaska's election laws

SB 64 Includes Provisions from Bills Proposed by Republican, Democratic, and Independent Legislators in Recent Legislatures

32nd Legislature

- SB 39 (Sen. Shower)
- HB 66 (Rep. Tuck)
- HB 157 (Rep. Rasmussen)
- HB 267 (Rep. Schrage)
- HB 286/ SB 167 (Governor)

33rd Legislature

- SB 1 (Sen. Shower)
- SB 5 (Sen. Shower)
- SB 7 (Sen. Shower)
- SB 19 (Sen. Kawasaki)
- HB 37 (Rep. Schrage)
- HB 129 (House Judiciary)
- SB 138 (Senate State Affairs)
- HB 358 (Rep. Cronk)

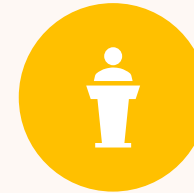
SB 64 includes several provisions from HB 63/ SB 70 introduced by the governor this year



Repeals the requirement that poll worker pay be set by regulation



Allowing cover sheets for absentee ballot packets to be submitted electronically



Beginning absentee ballot review 12 days before the election, governor originally propose 10 days but the Senate extended it to 12 days



Repealing the requirement that absentee ballots that arrive after the deadline be counted during recounts



Adding becoming ineligible for a PFD to the list of criteria that triggers a voter roll clean-up notice



Stopping special needs ballots from being rejected due to mistakes by poll workers or representatives



Requiring post paid return envelopes for absentee ballots

Voter registration list clean-up

In 2022 it was estimated that Alaska's voter registration list was equal to 106% of the adult population. SB 64 streamlines the process of removing voters who have left the state.

Adds several indications of residency in another state to the list of factors that trigger notice and clarifies the definition of residency for voting.

Voters who do not verify their registration are moved to inactive status. Inactive voters will not appear on precinct registers although their votes will be counted, and their registration reactivated if they vote or request an absentee ballot.

Current Voter List Maintenance Process

- Every January DOE mails nonforwardable notices to voters who have not voted, updated their registration, or signed a petition within two general elections or who have had mail from DOE returned to sender.
- If the voter does not respond confirming their address, DOE mails a second forwardable notice informing the voter that if they do not confirm their address within 45 days their registration will be inactivated.
- Inactive voters registrations are canceled completely if the voter does not vote or contact DOE within two general elections.

Expedited process under SB 64

- DOE will mail a single forwardable notice requesting voters confirm their address within 45 days
- SB 64 expands the number of voters who will be sent notices to include voters who there is evidence have claimed residency in another state
- This process remains in compliance with the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act

SB 64 requires notices be sent when DOE learns a voter....

- Registers to vote in another state
- Receives a driver's license in another state
- Registers a vehicle in another state
- Receives public assistance from another state
- Serves on a jury in another state
- Obtains a resident hunting or fishing license from in another state
- Pays resident tuition for a public university in another state
- Receives a residential property tax exemption in another state
- Receives a benefit only available to residents of another state

Annual Review of Master Voter List

Requires DOE to hire a nationally recognized subject matter expert to review the voter registration list

Expert will prepare an annual report to the Legislature making recommendations for improving Alaska's list management practices



Clarifies the definition of residency and process to challenge a voter's residency

This bill clarifies that a voter's residence is a place where they have an articulable and reasonable plan to return to whenever they are absent.

It also establishes that the presumption a voter's registered address is accurate can be rebutted by evidence that they reside at another location.



Voter ID reforms

- Adds tribal IDs to the list of acceptable IDs for voting and voter registration
- Removes hunting and fishing licenses from the list of acceptable identification
- Requires that utility bills, government checks, paychecks, or other government documents must be issued within the last 60 days to be used as identification

Codifies a procedure for voters to cancel their registration

Currently the Division of Elections will cancel a voter's registration if they request, but it is not required by statute.

Voters would be allowed to cancel their registration in person or electronically.

The process for cancelling a registration would be posted at polling places.



Updating election related crimes

- Adds opening or tampering with ballot envelopes or packages, and hacking election equipment or software to the crime of unlawful interference with an election
- Adds knowingly disclosing results before the polls close or any confidential election information to the crime of election official misconduct in the first degree
- Both of these crimes are class C felonies

Codifies Data Sharing Between PFD Division and DOE

Data will be shared monthly for purposes of voter registration, confirming residence of a voter, identifying duplicate registrations, detecting voters who moved, and detecting ineligible voters

Data will include addresses, whether the applicant opted out of voter registration, and names of people attesting to the applicant's residency

SB 64 also codifies PFD applicant's right to opt-out of registering to vote or updating their registration

SB 64 removes barriers to voting

Repeals the witness signature requirement for absentee by mail ballots

Stops special needs ballots from being rejected because of mistakes by poll workers or representatives

Creates a ballot curing process

Requires secure ballot drop boxes be made available

Requires postage paid return postage for absentee by mail envelopes

Repeals the witness signature requirement for by-mail ballots

- In the 2022 special primary election, 2,724 ballots were rejected because of a missing witness signature- 1.7% of all ballots cast.
- Witness signature rejections disproportionately effected rural Alaska and military voters.
- In District 38, 10.9% of all ballots cast were rejected for missing witness signatures in the 2022 special primary.
- In the 2024 general election, District 18, which is mostly Joint Base Elemendorf-Richardson, had more by mail ballots rejected than any other district.
- There is no indication of any misconduct with these rejected ballots.

The witness signature requirement provides no meaningful election integrity protection

A handwritten signature in silver ink on a yellow background. The signature reads "Mickey Mouse" in a cursive, stylized font. The word "Mickey" is written in a large, flowing script, and "Mouse" is written in a smaller, more upright script to its right. A long, horizontal stroke underlines the entire signature.

- DOE has testified that they do not verify that witness signatures meet the statutory requirement that they be from a person at least 18.
- The Division accepts as valid any mark made in the witness signature portion of the envelope.
- There is no practical way for DOE to verify the identity and age of witnesses from other states and countries.
- The absentee by-mail envelope does not even provide space for the witness to print their name or provide their date of birth.

Alaska Law Generally Allows Self-Certification of Documents, and the Division of Elections Accepts Self-Certification of Petition Booklets

Certification Affidavit for this Petition Booklet
TO BE COMPLETED BY CIRCULATOR BEFORE A NOTARY OR OTHER OFFICIAL AUTHORIZED TO ADMINISTER AN OATH
Warning: Once the certification is complete, additional signers MUST NOT sign the booklet.

Circulator Payment Information: _____ (Name of Person or Organization) for this petition.
☐ YES - I have been or will be paid to gather signatures by _____.
☐ NO - I have not been nor will be paid to gather signatures.

Circulator Certification Statement:
After you have finished gathering signatures, you **MUST** complete the below before a notary or other official authorized to administer oaths. If a notary or other official authorized to administer an oath is UNAVAILABLE, you may self-certify in the self-certification box below.

_____, (Printed Name of Circulator), certify that:

- (1) I am a citizen of the United States and I am 18 years of age or older.
- (2) I am the only one who circulated this booklet.
- (3) The signatures appearing herein were made in my actual presence.
- (4) To the best of my knowledge they are the signatures of the persons whose names they purport to be.
- (5) To the best of my knowledge the signatures are of persons who were qualified voters on the date of the signature.
- (6) I have not entered into an agreement with a person or organization in violation of AS 15.45.115(b).
- (7) I have not entered into an agreement with a person or organization in violation of AS 15.45.115(c).
- (8) I have indicated whether or not I have received payment or agreed to receive payment for the collection of signatures on this petition.
- (9) If so, I have provided the name of each person or organization that has paid or agreed to pay me for collecting signatures on this petition.

_____, Voter Number, DOB, ADL, AK ID# or Last Four of SSN (This information is optional and used only for identification purposes.)

Signature of Circulator _____

Notary or Official
A Notary Public or Other Official Authorized to Administer Oaths.
(A United States postmaster, a justice, judge, or magistrate of a court, a clerk or deputy clerk of a court, a commissioned officer or a municipal clerk.)
Subscribed and sworn to before me at _____ this _____ day of _____, A.D., 20____.
_____, Title _____
Signature of Notary Public or Authorized Official _____
My commission as a Notary Public expires _____

Self-Certification
If a notary or other official authorized to administer an oath is UNAVAILABLE, the circulator may self-certify as follows:
Because a Notary Public or other official authorized to administer oaths is unavailable, I certify under penalty of perjury that the above Certification Statement is true.
Signature of Circulator _____ Date _____
Location of Certification (City) _____

Initiative Committee Member
Kurtis D. Brink
410 N. Silver St., Ste. 100
Anchorage, AK 99501

For Office Use Only Book No. 0012
Staff Initials _____

Black Pierce
PO Box 10045
Fairbanks, AK 99710

Creating a Ballot Curing Process

- Within 24 hours of receiving the ballot, the Division mails a deficiency notice with curing instructions.
- If the voter has a phone number on file, the Division will call and text them as well.
- The voter returns the cure form confirming they voted the ballot with a copy of their ID and a signature.
- The cure process may be done electronically.
- A properly cured ballot will be counted if it is otherwise valid.
- If the voter responds that they did not vote the ballot, it will be referred to the Attorney General.

A voter will be able to cure their ballot and have it counted if it would be rejected because:

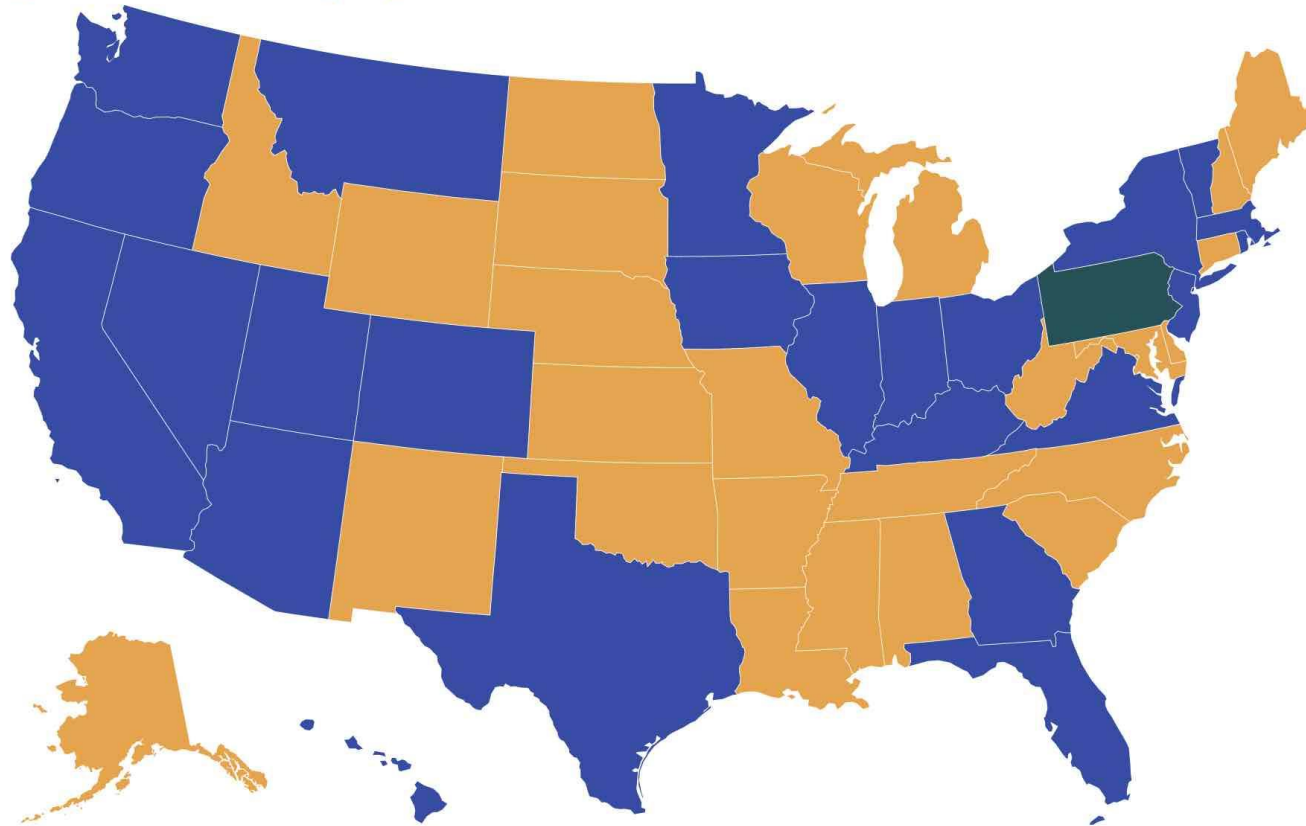
The voter did not sign the ballot envelope.

The voter's signature cannot be verified.

The voter did not provide an identifier that can be verified.

States with ballot-curing provisions

Counties permitted to cure ballots No Yes



BALLOTPEDIA

At Least 24
States Have
Adopted
Ballot Curing
Processes

21

Stop special needs ballots from being rejected because of mistakes by poll workers or voter representatives

- Currently special needs ballots can be rejected because of mistakes by poll workers or voter representatives.
- In the 2024 general election 5.7% of special needs ballots were rejected, compared with only 1.8% of by-mail ballots.
- Special needs rejections are especially high in rural Alaska, with 37.5% of special needs ballots in District 40 being rejected.
- Often one volunteer will deliver special needs ballots to all residents of a senior living facility, so if this person is not properly trained an entire facility could have their votes rejected.
- SB 64 codifies requirements for DOE to check IDs and collect information from representatives.

Requires secure drop boxes be provided for by-mail ballots

- Secure drop boxes were offered in 2020 and 2022 but not 2024, resulting in voter confusion.
- Drop boxes would be required, if practicable, at Division of Elections offices.
- The division shall establish regulations governing where any additional drop boxes would be located.





Ballot tracking system for absentee ballots

The Division already offers ballot tracking to allow voters to check whether their ballot has been counted, this bill requires tracking barcodes to allow ballots to be tracked in the mail.

Voters can check the status of their ballot online and see whether it has been counted or rejected.

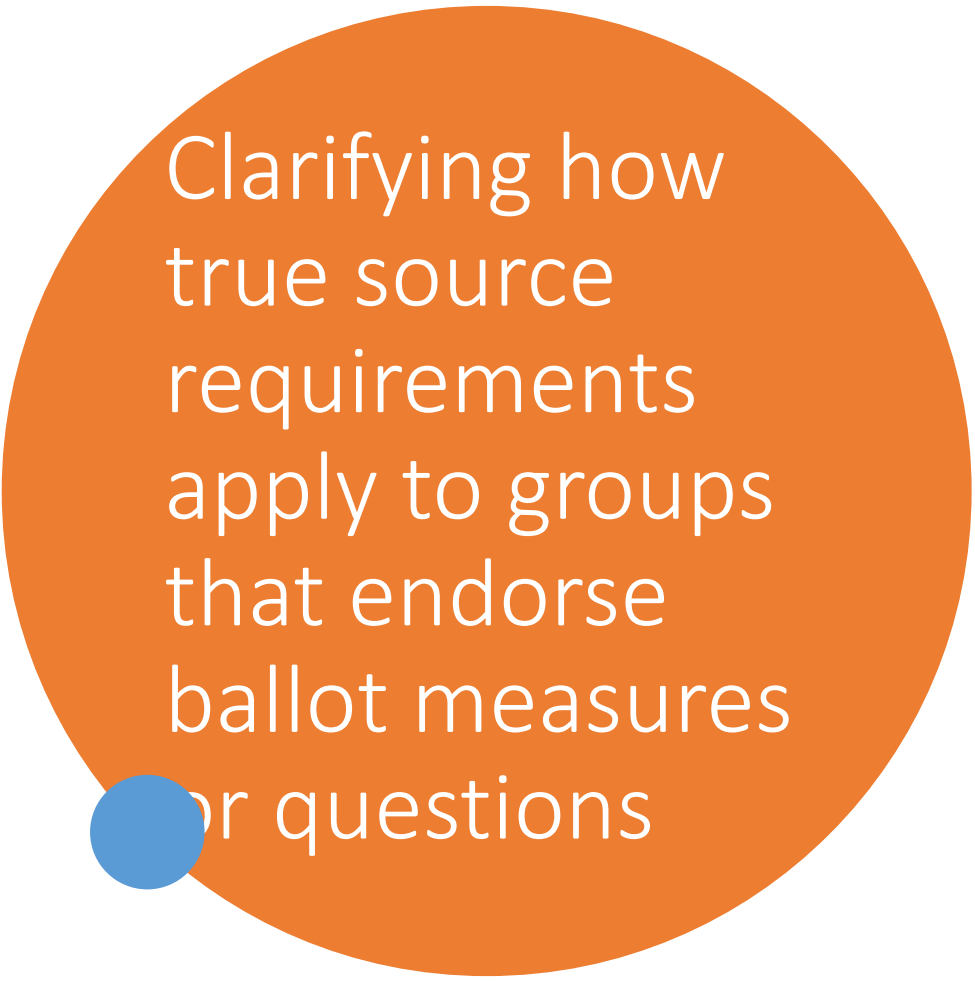

This bill requires a multi-factor authentication system to protect voters' privacy

SB 64 provides for faster more transparent reporting of election results

Begin ballot review 12 days before the election to allow more ballots to be counted on Election Night

Providing ranked choice voting tabulations when unofficial results are released

Setting a uniform deadline of 10 days after the election for absentee ballots to arrive, allowing elections to be certified 5 days earlier



Clarifying how true source requirements apply to groups that endorse ballot measures or questions

- Recently APOC issued an advisory opinion ruling that if an entity makes any communication related to a ballot measure or question, they must disclose all of their income unless they only used money specifically for this purpose
- This will have a chilling effect on organizations like chambers of commerce that often support or oppose ballot measures or bond propositions but for who that is not their primary purpose
- SB 64 clarifies that an entity making a communication is the true source of their contribution

BEST PRACTICES FOR RELEASING RCV ELECTION RESULTS

Executive Summary

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) uses a round-by-round count of ballots to eliminate the candidates with the least support and to ensure that the candidate with majority support wins.¹ Ranked-choice voting reduces wasted votes and encourages people to vote sincerely, rather than strategically.

In any election, however, one thing remains the same: the public – voters, candidates, parties, and the media – will have an intense interest in learning the results. Because RCV uses a new method to identify who won, the process for releasing results in RCV races can be especially important to minimize confusion, to convey results in a way that gives people the information they need, and to ensure the outcome is trusted and understood.

FairVote and the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center have analyzed results from hundreds of RCV contests. Based on that experience, we recommend the following tried and true tips:

1. Release a preliminary round-by-round tally on Election Night
2. Continue to release preliminary tallies as more votes are counted
3. Conduct vote total checks with each release of preliminary results
4. Publish the full ballot record so that anyone can verify the result
5. Make use of tools for visualizing RCV results
6. Clearly communicate expectations, timelines, and results

Following these best practices – to the extent permitted by state law – can help instill public confidence in the electoral process and its outcome.²

¹ RCV can also be used to elect multiple candidates in multi-winner elections, such as city council races. All of the best practices recommended in this report apply to multi-winner uses of RCV as well.

² For more information on administering RCV elections, we recommend two additional resources. For best practices in displaying results, see Best practices for ranked choice voting ballots and other materials, [Center for Civic Design](#) (2017). For an overview of reporting practices in RCV jurisdictions, see [Reporting the Results of Ranked-Choice Voting Elections: Successes and Pitfalls Across Forty-Six RCV Jurisdictions](#), Equal Democracy Project at Harvard Law School & Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center (forthcoming Fall 2022).

Adopt best practices for reporting ranked-choice voting results

This bill adopts the national best practices identified by the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center requiring unofficial ranked-choice tabulations be released along with the unofficial first round results.

This will provide greater transparency throughout the counting process and reduce confusion about results.

Requires transparency for unofficial results

Which Election Day precincts
have been counted

Which districts, days, and
count codes of absentee
ballots have been counted

Which precincts and count
codes of questioned ballots
have been counted

Count code data for absentee
ballots reviewed

Clarify rules for poll watchers and ballot review observers

Currently statutes only provide for observers for political parties, candidates, initiatives, referenda, and recalls at polls and counting centers, and only parties may observe the State Review Board.

This provision clarifies that candidates, ballot measure, and ballot question campaigns may have observers at polls, counting centers, and the State Review Board.

Ballot questions include constitutional amendments, judicial retention, bond propositions, and advisory votes.

This bill also clarifies that campaigns may have observers at all tables where ballots are being reviewed within a counting center.

Clear rules for challenging ballot review decisions

Currently it is unclear how long campaigns have to file a challenge and campaigns often have to negotiate this with the regional counting centers.

This bill requires regulations to explicitly address the challenge process.

These regulations must allow a reasonable time to submit a challenge.

Additional risk limiting audits

- Requires DOE to adopt regulations to adopt additional audit procedures to ensure integrity and accuracy of final results.
- The State Review Board reviews all results before certification, including hand counting one precinct per district, but current law limits the scope of this review.
- Campaigns will be able to observe the State Review Board process.

Cybersecurity program

- Requires the division to adopt regulations for a cybersecurity program to protect records from hackers and data breaches.
- The program will include cybersecurity training for elections officials.

Synthetic Media

- Prohibits the use of undisclosed synthetic media (commonly known as “deepfakes”) to influence elections.
- It also provides that someone defamed by an election related deepfake may seek injunctive relief.
- Any electioneering communication that uses synthetic media must include a disclosure statement: “This image/video/audio) has been manipulated.”

“Synthetic media” means an image, audio recording, or video recording of an individual’s appearance, speech, or conduct that is manipulated by artificial intelligence in a manner that creates a realistic but false image, audio recording, or video recording procedures.

Repeal the requirement for APOC to have offices in every Senate district

- Current law requires the Alaska Public Offices Commission to have offices in every Senate district.
- They have never had the funding level to meet this requirement.
- This bill replaces this requirement with a requirement that they make reports available on their website.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT AT ANCHORAGE

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
OF ALASKA, DUNLEAVY FOR
ALASKA and ERIC SIEBELS,

Plaintiffs,

v.

STATE OF ALASKA, and the STATE OF
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC
FACILITIES,

Defendants.

Case No. 3AN-18-08845 CI

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CLERK TRIAL COURTS
BY:
DEPUTY CLERK

STIPULATED FINAL JUDGMENT AND ORDER #6

IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that judgment is entered as follows:

1. The State of Alaska and the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities ("DOT&PF") are permanently enjoined from enforcing Alaska Statute 19.25.075-.180 against small, temporary, political campaign signs no larger than 32 square feet in size located on private property outside of any highway rights-of-way that are displayed by the owners or residents of the property without compensation for such display;

2. DOT&PF may continue to enforce A.S. 19.25.105 by removing unauthorized signs from highway rights-of-way without notice to sign owners, but when doing so shall treat all signs in an equal, content-neutral manner;

Codifying the ACLU of Alaska v. State of Alaska Settlement Terms

Alaska's billboard law bans advertising along state roads. In a 2018 settlement the state agreed not to enforce this ban against political signs 32 square feet or smaller on private property if the sign is not in a highway right of way or displayed for compensation.

This provision updates the statutes to codify these settlement terms.

Require Public Official Financial Disclosures for Redistricting Board members

- Redistricting Board members would be added to the list of officials who must file public official financial disclosures with APOC.
- Financial disclosures allow the public to know of any potential conflicts of interest.
- Dozens of boards already require financial disclosures.

Clarifies the Open Meetings Act applies to the Redistricting Board

- The OMA requires public notice for meetings and that decisions be made in public.
- In two different redistricting cycles, courts have ruled against the board's argument that it was not subject to the OMA.
- This will make it crystal clear in statute that the board must follow the OMA.

Allows voters to request to continue to sign-up to receive absentee by-mail for future elections

- The Division currently allows this for military and overseas voters.
- This bill would allow voters to continue to receive by-mail if they vote at least once every four years.
- Every absentee ballot returned will continue to be reviewed to ensure it is valid.

Codify language assistance requirements

- Federal law requires the state to provide language assistance for voting in certain languages.
- Currently Alaska provides assistance in 8 indigenous languages and dialects as well as Tagalog.
- This bill codifies into Alaska law the requirement that notices be posted in precincts where language assistance is available





Questions?

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