

Joe Hayes

From: Robert Welton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2025 5:10 PM
To: Senate State Affairs
Cc: Robert Welton
Subject: Public Comments on SB 70

**Public comments on Senate Bill 70,
Thirty-fourth Legislature, First Session, Senate State Affairs Committee, February 4, 2025**

Robert Welton
Unaffiliated
Douglas

Thank you for the opportunity to make public comments on SB 70, the Governor's election reform bill. This bill is a mixed bag, with four main subjects: First, it changes how school districts are elected, second, it makes changes to improve review of voter registrations and speed up vote certification; Third it deletes voter registration with Permanent Fund Dividend applications; and finally, the bill discontinues sending paper voter guides to all Alaskan households.

I have no special knowledge of school board elections or governance, so will leave it to others to comment. (sections 1-4)

There are many good provisions in the Governor's bill, and two very bad ideas. Let me explain my thinking:

Voter List Maintenance and Timelines:

SB 70 has many good ideas, that will improve the accuracy of voter registration lists and speed up election reviews. Section 5 simplifies residency definitions, which will make auditing voter registration records easier. Section 9 and 10 simplifies notice requirements for potentially reviewing/removing invalid registrations. This should help keep our voter registration records more accurate. Sections 11-12 will allow the Division of elections to modernize voting booths.

Killing PFD Voter Registration

This is a very bad idea! When more people who vote in elections, the government will become more responsive to the public's wishes. Everyone in Alaska applies for a PFD. Putting voter registration on the PFD application makes it easier for everyone to apply.

It is true the National Voter Registration Act only requires offering voter registration at the Department of Motor Vehicles. But there are only DMV offices in the larger cities of Alaska. Removing PFD registration leaves voters in these communities with nothing. As such it might be a violation of the NVRA. We should not choke off people's access to the ballot box!

Relevant sections are Section 6, 7, 8, 9, 21 and 25. All of these are horrible ideas that should not be passed into law.

Stopping Mailed Voter Guides

Another very bad idea by the Governor! I understand printing and mailing election guides costs money. If this isn't a good expenditure of public funds, I don't know what is.

It's true many young people get their information on their phones. But people who live in remote areas don't have easy access to cell phones and the internet. Also, members of the older generation, like myself, greatly prefer paper documents to review, make notes on, etc. Surely we can find a better place to save a few bucks! The voter guide cancellation is contained in Section 23.

So as I said at the start, the Governor's bill has some good ideas related to voter list maintenance and election administration. But it also contains the two abominations of killing PFD voter registration and also stopping mailing of printed voter guides to all Alaskans. I hope these two bad ideas don't make it out of this committee.

Thanks for taking the time to hear my rather detailed comments. Thank you as well for your service to the people of Alaska.