

Alaska State Legislature

Senator Mike Shower, Chair
Interim: 600 E Railroad Ave., Ste 1
Wasilla, AK 99654
(907) 376-3370



Senator Lora Reinbold, Vice Chair
Senator Mia Costello
Senator Roger Holland
Senator Scott Kawasaki

Senate State Affairs Committee

SB142- Sponsor Statement

“An Act relating to the sovereignty of State Elections.”

Congress passed HR 1 in the House but the Senate did not have the votes to break a filibuster. It remains stalled, for now. HR 1 federalizes state elections and foists constitutionally questionable federal mandates upon the states, overriding long honored state election procedures.

Congress has the constitutional authority to manage certain aspects of federal elections. Article 1 Sec 4: “The times, places and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing senators.”

The relationship between states and the federal government has been long and cooperative. States need their federal representatives elected and have the staff, voting system and voter rolls of who is a resident and further prescribes what qualifies a voter. In return, the feds enjoy utilizing the low maintenance state election system to elect our federal congressional members.

Today many states, including Alaska, are working to restore confidence in the election system. The last 5 years have shaken the confidence of many Americans in our election process across the political spectrum. In a gross overreach, the federal government is attempting to foist a “one size fits all” approach with HR1 by mandating federal policy nationwide versus the long-standing practice of letting states set policy and manage their own elections. We’ve heard fake cries of “putting people in chains” and “Jim Crow” type election laws from the highest levels of government, including the president and members of congress. Divisive and virtue signaling language from elected officials does not help solve

Americans shaken confidence in our election system. We are asked for ID to “prove” who we are in nearly every aspect of our lives. Asking a voter to prove they are a United States Citizen, resident of a state, or to positively identify themselves is prudent and reasonable. Verifying a person’s identity and eligibility to vote is sound policy, it’s why we’re asked for ID for nearly anything we do today of any significance. Voting is one of the most sacred and important actions we take as citizens. Who we elect and what those officials do affects us at every level of our lives. A Congressional policy of not showing identification to vote is a clear and present danger for our Republic.

We believe because the state legislatures formerly gave up the power to choose our own senators, the states are justified with the fight to retain strong control of how they are elected by the people. The 17th Amendment repealed this provision of the constitution and afterward the states prescribed the procedures of the people, not the legislatures, electing their Senators to represent them.

If the Federal Government nationalizes the election system, undermining the long tradition of mutual cooperation, or worse, the sovereign rights of a state to manage its internal election affairs, then Alaska should simply tell the federal government to run their own election, bifurcating the election process.

Doing so will require the federal government to create its own exhaustive system of voter rolls, voter qualifications, tabulators, reporting, counting, recruiting and training volunteers, and a myriad of other details which are expensive and difficult to manage without the state’s cooperation. In short, Congress should think long and hard about the unintended consequences of mandating federalization of elections upon sovereign states and should be reminded it was the states who originally delegated their powers to the United States. (Tenth Amendment). This bill rescinds a portion of that delegated authority.