



March 1, 2023

Representative Calvin Schrage
Alaska Legislature
State Capitol Room 404
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Calvin Schrage:

We are writing in support of House Bill 37, "An Act relating to elections; relating to voters, relating to the crime of unlawful interference with voting...."

The League of Women Voters of Alaska is a nonpartisan, grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering everyone to fully participate in our democracy. We do not support or oppose candidates or parties, but we do engage in education and advocacy activities. Our advocacy today is aimed at protecting every Alaskan's freedom to vote.

Toward that end, we support HB 37 as a step forward in ensuring that every registered voter's ballot choice will be counted. Among the features of the bill that will stand as improvements in our election system are the bill's proposal to:

- Provide a prepaid envelope for absentee and mail-in ballots. This measure will ensure that even citizens who vote from locations with no fully staffed post office will know that their ballot will not be delayed for lack of the appropriate postage;
- Collecting the actual or optionally an electronic image of a voter's signature on their registration application will allow the Division of Election to verify the signatures on absentee, mail-in, or special needs ballots;
- Provide a ballot-curing procedure in a timely manner to allow voters who inadvertently make errors in their absentee or mail-in ballot envelope the opportunity to correct those errors or verify identify before the ballots are rejected.

The bill also addresses some of the Alaska conditions that may prevent Alaskan voters from having access to the polls on election day. Although the proposed remedies are

not exhaustive, they are one more step in recognizing the challenges of making sure that every Alaskan voter who wishes to vote will not be denied access to a ballot.

Therefore, we urge the Alaska Legislature to give this bill a hearing, move it forward, adopt its provisions as described above, and begin the discussion of how we can make sure that our Division of Elections has the tools to achieve its mission "to ensure public confidence in the electoral process by administering voter registration and elections with the highest level of professional standards, integrity, security, accuracy and fairness."

Sincerely,

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