



PO Box 101345
Anchorage, AK 99510-1345

House State Affairs Committee
Representative Ashley Carrick, Chair
House.State.Affairs@akleg.gov

February 9, 2025

Dear Representative Carrick and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports the passage of HB 43: Elections Voting Ballots. The League is nonpartisan and does not support or oppose candidates or parties, but it does take positions on issues after reaching a consensus based on careful study. Our position on Election and Election Processes states: "The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) believes voting is a fundamental citizen's right that must be guaranteed. LWVAK works to protect that right and to increase voter participation by all citizens." We believe that the provisions of HB 43 will serve both to protect the rights of Alaska voters and to reduce barriers to participation in elections for qualified Alaska citizens and mirrors the protections offered in SB 64, which we also support.

We highlight three provisions of the bill that will offer the State Division of Elections means of improving the likelihood that a citizen's vote will be counted at relatively low or no cost to the State:

1. **Prepaid postage for absentee and mail-in ballots.** The fact that some ballots require more postage than the standard stamp, that fewer people today communicate by traditional mail and may not have stamps on hand, and that postal service in many areas of the state is contracted and may have limited hours of service, while in other communities there may not be local sales of postage stamps at all, means that this proposal is a low-cost way to easily erase one obstacle in the voting process.
2. **Elimination of the signature requirement for absentee and mail-in ballots.** The Division of Elections should use its resources to verify voters' identities and should not rely on an often-illegible signature of a witness who is not identified in any other meaningful way on the cover envelope for mailed ballots. The requirement puts up an unnecessary barrier to some people who live by themselves or who may be out of state or country, and this requirement has in fact caused the rejection of the votes of otherwise eligible and qualified voters.
3. **A ballot cure process.** Such a process would ensure that the Division of Elections looks for problems with return envelope identification information before the election and, like 24 other states and the Municipality of Anchorage, allows voters the chance to provide missing information before their votes are discarded. Currently the work of the Division of Elections to identify problems is already established but takes place after the election with no recourse for the voters when they have been notified that their vote did not count.

These three provisions along with others in the bill will work to make voting more accessible to Alaskans who wish to vote in the elections that the Alaska Division of Elections works so diligently to ensure are safe and secure.

Sincerely,

Sue Sherif
On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Alaska Board