



# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

### SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI, CHAIR

## Senate Bill 64

### Election Reform

#### Draft CS Version H

#### Sectional Analysis

**Section 1:** allows voters to register to vote within 30 days of an election.

**Section 2:** clarifies the residency requirements to define a residence as a place where a voter has a reasonable and articulable plan to return to whenever they are absent and provides that the presumption that a voter's registered address is correct may be rebutted by evidence that the voter has established residency at a different location.

**Section 3:** clarifies that a person can use an electronic signature to register to vote online.

**Section 4:** adds tribal identification cards to the list of acceptable identification for voter registration and removes hunting or fishing licenses from the list.

**Section 5:** adds tribal identification cards to the list of acceptable identification for voter registration by mail and removes hunting or fishing licenses list.

**Section 6:** add two subsections related to voter registration.

Subsection (g) allows voters to designate a language to receive election materials in from the languages that the Division of Elections (Division) is required to provide language assistance in.

Subsection (h) requires voters registering within 30 days of the election to confirm that they have resided in their house district since at least 30 days before the election.

**Section 7:** clarifies that electronic signatures are valid of the voter or a person acting with power of attorney on behalf of the voter.

**Section 8:** states that a person who registers to vote within 30 days of an election, and who meets the qualifications to register, may vote an absentee, special needs, or questioned ballot for that election.

**Section 9:** is conforming language relating to registering within 30 days of an election.

**Section 10:** is conforming language relating to registering within 30 days of an election.

**Section 11:** is conforming language relating to registering within 30 days of an election.

**Section 12:** is conforming language relating to registering within 30 days of an election.

**Section 13:** requires the Division to send a single forwardable notice as part of voter list maintenance and adds additional categories of voters to receive notices.

**Section 14:** is conforming language to reflect the changes made in Section 12.

**Section 15:** is conforming language to reflect the changes made in Section 12.

**Section 16:** establishes that registering to vote through a Permanent Fund Dividend application is not considered contacting the Division for purposes of the voter roll clean-up statutes.

**Section 17:** requires the director to develop a process for voters to cancel their registrations and require that instructions for how to cancel one's registration be prominently posted at polling places.

**Section 18:** creates a rural community liaison position in the Division.

**Section 19:** allows political parties, candidates, ballot measure, and ballot question campaigns to have observers at polling places and counting centers and clarifies that campaigns may have observers at all locations within a counting center where ballots are being reviewed or counted.

**Section 20:** repeals the requirement for the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC) to have offices in every senate district.

**Section 21:** repeals required specifications for voting booths.

**Section 22:** is a conforming section reflecting the repealed language in Section 21.

**Section 23:** requires that notices be posted informing voters of language assistance available at precincts where it is required by federal law.

**Section 24:** adds tribal identification cards to the list of identifications voters may use at polling places, removes hunting and fishing licenses from the list, and clarifies that when a voter uses a utility bill, bank statement, check, or other government document as identification that the document must be dated within the previous 90 days.

**Section 25:** clarifying that the division must include results for all rank levels on the precinct results.

**Section 26:** enacts new subsections related to unofficial results and ballot review data.

Subsection (b) requires the Division to release data for which ballots have been counted along with unofficial results.

Subsection (c) requires the Division to release data for count codes for absentee ballots each day ballots are reviewed.

Subsection (d) provides a definition of "count code."

**Section 27:** repeals the requirement that poll worker compensation be set by regulation.

**Section 28:** allows candidates and ballot proposition campaigns to observe the State Review Board process and repeals language suggesting that observers can assist with the review process.

**Section 29:** allows the Division to adopt additional risk limiting audit procedures as part of the State Review Board process.

**Section 30:** requires that all absentee ballots include a postage-paid return envelope. It also requires that there is a space for recording the date that the voter executed the certificate.

**Section 31:** provides that special needs ballots may not be rejected because of errors made by poll workers or representatives.

**Section 32:** repeals the witness signature requirement for absentee ballots.

**Section 33:** states that a ballot received after the day of the election that is not postmarked or postmarked after the election may be counted if it is marked with a United States Postal Service tracking barcode that indicates it was mailed on or before the day of the election.

**Section 34:** adds tribal identification cards to the list of acceptable identification for a first-time voter who registered by mail or electronically who votes absentee and removes hunting or fishing licenses from the list.

**Section 35:** contains two provisions related to absentee by-mail ballots.

Subsection (m) allows voters to register to continue to receive absentee by mail ballots so long as the voter votes at least once every four years.

Subsection (n) allows voters to request by-mail ballots in any language for which the division is required to provide language assistance by federal law.

**Section 36:** allows absentee voting officials to transmit cover sheets for absentee ballot packages electronically.

**Section 37:** requires absentee ballot review to begin 10 days before the election.

**Section 38:** contains conforming amendments to reflect the repeal of the witness signature requirement the new tracking barcode provisions, and the changes to the list of acceptable identifications.

**Section 39:** requires the Division to adopt procedures for challenging ballot review decisions by regulation and that these regulations must provide a reasonable amount of time to submit a challenge.

**Section 40:** provides that ballots that are properly cured under the new statute shall be counted during the state review board process if they were not previously counted.

**Section 41:** enacts two new sections of statutes:

New AS 15.20.221 requires the division to establish a ballot tracking system to allow a voter to track the status of their absentee by-mail ballot.

New AS 15.20.222 provides for ballot curing for absentee ballots.

- Subsection (a) requires the division to notify voters if there is no signature on the envelope or if the voter did not provide a sufficient identifier of the process to cure their ballot.
- Subsection (b) requires that these notices must explain the need for a signature for verification purposes and include a form for the voter to provide their signature and copy of the identification.
- Subsection (c) provides that a ballot may be cured and counted if the voter returns the form, confirms that they did in fact vote, and provides a signature and copy of their identification.

- Subsection (d) provides that a ballot shall not be counted, and the director will refer the matter to the attorney general for investigation, if the voter indicates they did not in fact vote the ballot.
- Subsection (e) states that the division shall update their records with the signature the voter provides on the ballot curing forms.

**Section 42:** repeals the requirement that ballots that arrived after the deadline for ballots to arrive be counted during a recount.

**Section 43:** requires that the director provide secure ballot drop boxes at every Division office, adopt regulations for security standards for drop boxes, and allows municipalities to provide drop boxes in accordance with regulations adopted by the Division.

**Section 44:** clarifies that the return postage for absentee by-mail ballots required by Section 30 does not violate the prohibition on giving a thing of value in exchange for a person voting.

**Section 45:** clarifies that intentionally opening or tampering with ballot envelopes without the permission of the Division and hacking or altering election machinery is covered by the crime of unlawful interference with an election.

**Section 46:** provides that an election official who knowingly discloses election results before the polls close commits the crime of election official misconduct in the first degree.

**Section 47:** requires the lieutenant governor to develop a cybersecurity program to defend the voter registration records kept by the division.

**Section 48:** codifies the settlement in ACLU of Alaska v. State of Alaska related to campaign signs along state highways.

**Section 49:** removes the requirement that reports filed with APOC be available at offices in every senate district and requires that they be available on APOC's website.

**Section 50:** clarifies that reports filed with APOC shall be available at the commission's offices and on their website.

**Section 51:** allows voters to register to vote within 30 days of a municipal election.

**Section 52:** removes a requirement that certain municipal candidates file their public official financial disclosure twice.

**Section 53:** requires Redistricting Board members to file annual public official financial disclosures with APOC.

**Section 54:** clarifies that the Redistricting Board is subject to the Open Meetings Act.

**Section 55:** repeals redundant language relating to poll watchers.

**Section 56:** requires the division to provide a report to the legislature by November 1, 2026, with recommendations for expanding early voting in rural communities and low-income neighborhoods.

**Section 57:** states that Sections 45-47 only applies to offenses committed after the effective date of this act.

**Section 58:** provides a July 1, 2026 effective date for this bill.