



Testimony in Support of SB 64-H

March 25, 2025

Chair Kawasaki, Vice Chair Bjorkman, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill. My name is Barbara Smith Warner and I am the executive director of the National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI). NVAHI is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing voters' access to, use of, and confidence in voting at home with mailed-out ballots.

We appreciate the work you have done to bring many elements together in this bill to expand access to mail ballots and the systems that support voters' confidence in them.

Over the past few decades—and exponentially since 2020—voters across the country have embraced mailed-out ballots, also known as Vote at Home, vote by mail or absentee voting. Voting by mail is **popular, secure, and cost-effective**. It saves local governments millions in administrative costs each election while ensuring that voters—especially those in rural and Indigenous communities—have reliable access to the ballot.

Alaska has been a leader in democracy reform that increases voter enfranchisement, and this bill will add to that by expanding and strengthening your Vote at Home system. Anchorage and Juneau already benefit from the cost and administrative savings of running all Vote at Home local elections, and given Alaska's unique geography and population, expanding Vote at Home is a critical step toward ensuring that all eligible voters can participate in the democratic process.

I'd like to recognize some of the best practices for Vote at Home systems that SB 64 will provide:

- **Eliminating the witness requirement** for mail ballots (increases voter convenience and participation)
- Implementing a **ballot tracking program** and a **standardized curing system**, along with the **10-day post-election deadline** for ballot receipt (increases voter confidence and knowledge in system and provides ample time for election administrators)
- Providing **sufficient drop boxes and prepaid postage** on return ballots (increases voter convenience and participation)
- **Allowing pre-processing of ballots** before Election Day (faster reporting)

NVAHI also suggests as a best practice that voters be allowed the option of Single Sign Up, also known as permanent absentee, to Vote at Home. This maximizes voter convenience and decreases administrative costs for election administrators by allowing voters to automatically receive their mail ballot for every election, instead of having to reapply for each election.

Since 2018, NVAHI has worked with policymakers, election officials, and administrators to support the implementation of effective Vote at Home systems. We applaud the ongoing work of the Alaska legislature, and ask that the committee vote to advance SB 64 to continue making voting as accessible and secure as possible for all Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Barbara Smith Warner

Executive Director, National Vote at Home Institute

bsw@voteathome.org