

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 13, 2025

3:17 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Ashley Carrick, Chair
Representative Andi Story, Vice Chair
Representative Rebecca Himschoot
Representative Ky Holland
Representative Sarah Vance
Representative Kevin McCabe
Representative Elexie Moore

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 10

"An Act relating to the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 21

"An Act relating to voter preregistration for minors at least 16 years of age; and relating to confidentiality of voter registration and preregistration records of minors at least 16 years of age."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 43

"An Act relating to elections; relating to voters; relating to the crime of unlawful interference with voting; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 10

SHORT TITLE: ADD FACULTY MEMBER UNIV BOARD OF REGENTS

SPONSOR(s) : REPRESENTATIVE(s) CARRICK

01/22/25 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25 (H) STA, FIN
02/06/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/06/25 (H) Heard & Held
02/06/25 (H) MINUTE(STA)
02/13/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 21

SHORT TITLE: VOTER PREREGISTRATION FOR MINORS

SPONSOR(s) : REPRESENTATIVE(s) STORY

01/22/25 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25 (H) STA, JUD
02/11/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/11/25 (H) Heard & Held
02/11/25 (H) MINUTE(STA)
02/13/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 43

SHORT TITLE: ELECTIONS, VOTING, BALLOTS

SPONSOR(s) : REPRESENTATIVE(s) SCHRAGE

01/22/25 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/17/25
01/22/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25 (H) STA, FIN
02/11/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/11/25 (H) Heard & Held
02/11/25 (H) MINUTE(STA)
02/13/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

JILL DUMESNIL, President
United Academics
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 10.

ABIGAIL SCHIFFMILLER, Graduate Student
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 10.

DR. MATTHEW CUELLAR, Associate Professor

University of Alaska Anchorage
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 10.

JACQUELINE CASON, Faculty Senate President
University of Alaska Anchorage
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 10.

STUART RELAY, Staff
Representative Ashley Carrick
Alaska State Legislature

POSITION STATEMENT: Summarized the changes in the committee substitute for HB 21.

CAROL BEECHER, Director
Division of Elections
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 21 and HB 43.

ROBERT WELTON, representing self
Douglas, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 21 and HB 43.

CHARLIE FRANZ, representing self
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 21.

ROHN ANDERSON, Member
Alaska Youth Vote
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 21.

SENATOR MIKE SHOWER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified and provided comments on HB 43.

RANDY RUEDRICH, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 43.

PEGGY ROBINSON, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 43.

CHARLIE FRANZ, representing self
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 43.

LINDA MORNING, representing self
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 43.

KEVIN BANKS, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 43.

MICHELLE SPARCK, Director
Get Out the Native Vote
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 43.

SUE SHERIF, Board Member
League of Women Voters of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 43.

SAMANTHA MINTZ-GENTZ, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 43.

CHRISTOPHER CONSTANT, Chair
Anchorage Assembly
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 43.

DONNA ANDERSON, representing self
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 43.

AMANDA NDEMO, Staff
Representative Calvin Schrage
Alaska State Legislature

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of the prime sponsor,
Representative Schrage, read the sectional analysis for HB 43.

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, discussed and answered
questions about HB 43.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:17:59 PM](#)

CHAIR ASHLEY CARRICK called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:17 p.m. Representatives Story, Himschoot, Holland, McCabe, Moore, and Carrick were present at the call to order. Representative Vance arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 10-ADD FACULTY MEMBER UNIV BOARD OF REGENTS

[3:18:43 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 10, "An Act relating to the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska."

[3:19:14 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK opened public testimony on HB 10.

[3:19:44 PM](#)

JILL DUMESNIL, President, United Academics, testified in support of HB 10. She remarked that adding a faculty regent would complement the pre-existing student regent and ensure faculty perspectives and expertise are utilized. She said that currently one faculty member, a faculty alliance chair is allowed seven minutes to address the board at each quarterly board meeting. For all other faculty members that wish to speak directly to the board, they must call into a one-hour public testimony and are allowed only two minutes to speak. She expressed that HB 10 has broad support from faculty members across Alaska's universities, including the faculty senates and faculty unions.

[3:21:14 PM](#)

ABIGAIL SCHIFFMILLER, Graduate Student, University of Alaska Fairbanks, testified in support of HB 10. She explained that the core missions at the University of Alaska are teaching and research. She remarked that as a graduate student she has contributed to both these missions. She supports the addition of a faculty regent because it aligns with the two core

missions. She remarked that it is critical to the state and its stakeholders.

[3:24:27 PM](#)

MATTHEW CUELLAR, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Alaska Anchorage, testified in support of HB 10. He remarked that HB 10 is a transformative step for the university system and would empower the Board of Regents to more fully represent the voice of the faculty, an important but often underrepresented group. By creating a space for inclusive dialog, this bill calls for a more collaborative and responsive leadership structure.

[3:25:42 PM](#)

JACQUELINE CASON, Faculty Senate President, University of Alaska Anchorage, testified in support of HB 10. She reported that an article from the Inside Higher Education publication noted that faculty members are the university staff that students trust the most. She said this is because students know faculty members well. She remarked that because the teaching and learning relationship are critical to the university mission, it is important to have this voice. She remarked that a comprehensive understanding of the university system would foster better decision-making.

[3:28:09 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK closed public testimony on HB 10.

[3:28:27 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND noted that when the bill was introduced, he had asked questions about qualifications for faculty regency. He said he reached out to faculty and expressed his support for the bill in its current formulation.

[3:29:26 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK set an amendment deadline and announced that HB 10 was held over.

HB 21-VOTER PREREGISTRATION FOR MINORS

[3:29:42 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 21, "An Act relating to voter preregistration for minors at least 16 years of age; and relating to confidentiality of voter registration and preregistration records of minors at least 16 years of age."

3:30:01 PM

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 21, Version 34-LS0241\N, Dunmire, 2/11/25, as a working document.

3:30:10 PM

CHAIR CARRICK objected for purposes of discussion.

3:30:21 PM

STUART RELAY, Staff, Representative Ashley Carrick, presented the summary of changes [included in the committee file] to the proposed CS for HB 21. The summary of changes read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

* Section 1. AS 15.07.040 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

(b) A person who is at least 16 years of age and under 18 years of age may preregister to vote. To preregister, a person shall supply the information required under AS 15.07.060(a) to a registration official or a voter registration agency, except that, instead of a declaration that the applicant will be 18 years of age or older within 90 days after the date of registration under AS 15.07.060(a)(6), the person shall supply a declaration that the person will be 18 years of age or older within two years after the date of preregistration.

(c) Ninety days before a person preregistered to vote under (b) of this section reaches 18 years of age, the division shall send, by nonforwardable mail to the person's registration mailing address, a notice requesting address confirmation or correction. The notice must include a postage prepaid and pre-addressed return card on which the person may state the person's current address. The notice must indicate that the person should return the card not later than 45 days after the date of the notice and that failure to return the card by the 45-day deadline could result

in the person not being registered to vote. If the person returns the card, the division shall register the person when the person reaches 18 years of age and forward to the person a registration card.

* Sec. 2. AS 15.07.195 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(e) Notwithstanding another provision of this section, the address and telephone number of a person under 18 years of age who registers or preregisters to vote are confidential and not open to public inspection.

[3:31:13 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK noted that bill sponsor, Representative Story, was available to take questions pertaining to the CS for HB 21.

[3:31:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE asked if a new fiscal note was available for the CS.

MR. RELAY responded that the fiscal note has not been received, and it would be sent to committee members when completed.

[3:31:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked at what point before the election the voter card would be sent out and whether the Division of Elections would confirm if they were still an eligible voter.

MR. RELAY directed the question to Ms. Beecher.

[3:32:19 PM](#)

CAROL BEECHER, Director, Division of Elections, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, remarked that when the individual pre-registers they use the voter registration form which has the information necessary to register for voting, but in a separate category and stored in a separate designation on the voter registration system. The information would be what was provided on the voter registration form. She said 90 days prior to the voter's eighteenth birthday, the card would be sent out to confirm that their resident address is still the same.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked if pre-registered voters would be verified in the same fashion as adults.

MS. BEECHER responded yes; the division would be confirming the information much like it does with 17-year-olds when they pre-register.

[3:34:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE asked how many 17-year-olds are currently pre-registered for voting.

MS. BEECHER said she doesn't have the data but can follow up. She remarked that it is a fairly small number.

[3:34:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY remarked that one of the advantages of dropping the age to 16 is that hopefully more students will be interested in the democratic process and discuss it with their families. She remarked that in the first bill hearing discussions, the three months prior to leaving for post-secondary activities doesn't allow much time to discuss registration processes with family.

[3:36:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE remarked that requirements and checkboxes with the permanent fund dividend (PFD) form has generated considerable issues with the voter roll. He remarked about going to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) as a 16-year-old and checking a box to pre-register and was struggling to understand how to tie voter registration to something else.

[3:36:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said that the bill does not propose automatically registering 16-year-olds when they get their driver's license, but it would be an opportunity if they chose.

[3:37:25 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK removed her objection to the motion to adopt the proposed CS for HB 21, Version 34-LS0241\N, Dunmire, 2/11/25. There being no further objection, Version N was before the committee.

[3:37:30 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK remarked that the CS was adopted and inquired if there was any further discussion on the bill prior to public testimony.

[3:37:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked for clarification on voter rolls and if 16-year-olds, much like 17-year-olds can be pre-registered. However, nobody would go on the roll unless they have received the card, returned the card, and confirmed that they are a real voter. He asked if his understanding of this was correct.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY remarked that these pre-registered voters would be in a pending status until they reach the 90-day period prior to the eighteenth birthday, after which the card would go to the residence that they pre-registered with. She added that Version N was important, and it should be spelled out more clearly to ensure that it was clear how the process would be done.

[3:39:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked Representative Story why she feels the bill is necessary when an automatic registration is already in place with the PFD application. She said this almost feels unnecessary.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY responded that this is an opportunity to join 23 other states that have put this into place. She added that there is modest research that suggests young voters are more likely to vote following pre-registration. She said the whole idea is to build civic engagement and instill voter pride.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked for documentation pertaining to other states and if they have automatic voter enrollment systems. She reiterated that the PFD automatically registers applicants for voting. She said this information would be helpful to understand the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY remarked that one of the research papers available briefly touch on this, but supplemental information could be provided later.

[3:42:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MOORE asked Representative Story whether the proposed bill had any language that would require that the pre-registration applicants are American Citizens.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY responded that an attestation would be required.

[3:43:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Representative Story, if the governor's bill passed, which would remove PFD voter registration, whether it would impact this proposed bill.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY directed the question to Ms. Beecher.

MS. BEECHER remarked that the current way that PFD automatic registration works is that when an individual applies for the PFD, who is least 18 and marked that they are a US citizen, then they are sent a notice providing them with the opportunity to opt out or change address. She responded that it would eliminate the automatic registration for eighteen-year-olds applying for the first time.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT remarked that if the governor's bill passed, then HB 21 would be more important to prepare upcoming voters without PFD automatic registration at 18.

MS. BEECHER responded that this bill would put these 16-year-olds in the pending status and when they turn 18 then they would be registered. It would not be automatic but would allow those who applied to become registered using this system.

[3:47:06 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK opened public testimony on HB 21.

[3:47:28 PM](#)

ROBERT WELTON, representing self, testified in support of HB 21. He remarked that when he was a kid in the seventies, he went to a mock election as a student and found it empowering and exciting. He said it did help to instill voter engagement. He said that Version N is an improvement to put some control in.

[3:48:40 PM](#)

CHARLIE FRANZ, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 21. He opined that there is already a great deal of difficulty managing the voter roll and said this adds an additional workload to the Division of Elections, which is not equipped to handle it. He said it adds a layer of complexity. He said that if someone wants to learn about the election process, there are plenty of opportunities in school. He remarked that it isn't appropriate to implement the bill just because other states did so.

[3:50:31 PM](#)

ROHN ANDERSON, Member, Alaska Youth Vote, testified in support of HB 21. He said in the 2024 General Election, Alaska had a voter turnout of 55.8 percent, and the state has the second highest age requirement for voter registration. He remarked that almost every other state has put some pre-registration standards into law. He remarked that this system fails to provide necessary education and makes someone an observer not a participant. He remarked that other states that do this, do it because it works. Other states see increased civic engagement and voter turnout.

[3:52:49 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK after ascertaining there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 21.

[3:53:15 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK set an amendment deadline and announced that HB 21 was held over.

[3:53:40 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:53 p.m. to 3:56 p.m.

HB 43-ELECTIONS, VOTING, BALLOTS

[3:56:10 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 43 "An Act relating to elections; relating to voters; relating to the crime of unlawful interference with voting; and providing for an effective date."

CHAIR CARRICK opened public testimony on HB 43.

3:56:43 PM

MR WELTON stated that he supports the proposed changes in HB 43. He believes that they will increase access to the ballot box and when more people vote, government representation is better. He remarked on a couple pieces of the bill that he agreed with such as ballot curing and pre-registration. He stated that people like it when they can fit voting into a busy schedule. He also said that removing the witness signature without an authentication process was also sensible. He remarked on the postage paid envelope to make it easier for voters.

3:59:57 PM

SENATOR MIKE SHOWER, Alaska State Legislature, testified and provided comments on HB 43. He remarked that he had been working on this bill concept for the better part of eight years. He remarked that the previous testimony did not highlight the whole story. He remarked that there are other pieces of the bill that require attention but many parts of the bill he agreed with, such as ballot curing. He said that if a bill is passed, it needs to consider the other side of the equation. For example, if a 30-day registration was implemented, he remarked that districts can get flooded with people prior to an election. He also noted that every time someone applies for a permanent fund dividend (PFD), they are re-registered to vote. In other words, those people are perpetually on the voter roll and it's difficult to remove them and clean up the roll. He opined that Alaska has the worst voter roll in the nation and it is inflated. He remarked that not having a witness signature sounds good, but questioned how the state would then verify it. He discussed issues with current voting dynamics. He said ballot curing is great, but ballot tracking would be needed. He mentioned other states ballot curing procedures and how Alaska needs to follow suit. He remarked that he wanted to ensure that any bill that can pass the body would get the approval of the governor.

4:04:50 PM

RANDY RUEDRICH, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 43. He remarked that these processes were key to running a constitutional republic. He first addressed the issue of same-day registration and said that it is troubling that someone could be registered the same day. He said that people could be recruited off the street for voting purposes and this could

cause a distortion of ballot counts. He also said that the witness signature is extremely important and was the validation for the absentee ballots. He expressed concern that starting the thirty-day clock for early voting is troubling. He said that a candidate running for office needs to be on schedule and it could result in additional expenses for candidates. He also opined that curing ballots isn't necessary.

[4:08:50 PM](#)

PEGGY ROBINSON, representing self, testified that since 2002 she has been an early vote coordinator and has worked other roles pertaining to elections. She said that there are things in HB 43 that she likes but other components that she does not. She said that the 30-day registration window is an issue because the Division of Elections has a difficult time hiring enough people to work, especially for early elections. She said that a lot of these employees are older and only want to work half-time shifts. She could not imagine doing 30 days of work as opposed to the current 15. She said as chairs they are not paid more than the regular workers and there are no financial incentives to work more. She discussed vote-by-mail and its relationship with wait times at the ballot boxes. She said some people voted early because they were afraid that they wouldn't be able to make it to the ballot box.

[4:12:31 PM](#)

CHARLIE FRANZ, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 43. He said HB 43 weakens rather than strengthens the election system. He opined that if voters are careless and don't sign their ballot, it should be thrown away. If it is a ballot with a fictitious witness on it, it should be tossed as well and anyone who accepted it should be fired. He remarked that witness signatures should be required on all ballots. He said same-day registration adds to the pre-existing workload for the Division of Elections. He urged members to vote against the bill and instead strengthen the election system.

[4:14:31 PM](#)

LINDA MORNING, representing self, testified in support of HB 43. She said HB 43 would help Alaskans express their wishes to the government. She said along with the provisions in the bill, she would like to see a recurring voter list created and a liaison to help rural Alaskan voices be heard.

[4:15:22 PM](#)

KEVIN BANKS, representing self, testified in support of HB 43. He said he supports HB 43, and providing access by removing barriers is important. He said the fear of election fraud may be overestimated and often restricts access for eligible voters. He said that some people live in areas where it is difficult to get a witness, and the signature requirement is an odd barrier. He remarked on the things that would be ideal to accommodate voters. He said that ballot curing is a substantial improvement.

[4:17:36 PM](#)

MICHELLE SPARCK, Director, Get Out the Native Vote, testified that Get Out the Native Vote likes the idea of eliminating the witness signature. She said that the group also likes the idea of a ballot curing process and postage paid envelopes. She said that while extending voting to 30 days early could cause problems, it may help voters. She said that many rural residents are always traveling, and the increased accommodation would be good. She noted that Region 4 has suffered from voting issues in the last five election cycles and several villages have been left out. She noted that one area in 1992 had a turnout rate of 66.19 percent and the turnout rate in 2024 was 30.37 percent. She suggested that the drop in voter turnout was attributed to worsening voting systems. She echoed the previous testifier and suggested that a rural voting liaison would be important.

[4:21:22 PM](#)

SUE SHERIF, Board Member, League of Women Voters of Alaska, testified in support of HB 43. She said that the League of Women Voters believes that the bill would protect rights of Alaska voters and would increase participation for qualified voters. She remarked that the group supported the entire bill but wanted to put the spotlight on a few provisions. She remarked about the number of rejected ballots in 2022 and discussed the pre-paid postage proposals regarding ballots, and she said some communities don't have access to purchasing stamps. She said that witness signatures can cause issues for voters as well.

[4:25:54 PM](#)

SAMANTHA MINTZ-GENTZ, representing self, testified in support of HB 43. She said she especially liked the portion specific to special needs and the ability to cure ballots. She remarked on the low rates of voter turnout in Alaska and said that it's fine if the voting counts are late if legitimate ballots are counted. She also said she supports same day registration and voting at all open polling places. She said that Alaska should be increasing accessibility for voting and all those eligible.

[4:27:59 PM](#)

CHRISTOPHER CONSTANT, Chair, Anchorage Assembly, testified in support of HB 43. He said that the assembly hasn't taken an official stance on the bill, but the elections team has reviewed it and doesn't see anything that would adversely affect the elections in Anchorage. He requested a few amendments for HB 43 that would bring more accuracy to voter rolls. Anchorage requests changes to Alaska Statute Title 15 focusing on voter registration rolls. He said it currently takes eight years to remove a voter from the rolls if they are inactive. He said the state sends substantial money to non-voters who are no longer eligible for voting. He said that tools can be put into place to better maintain voter rolls. He listed additional amendment suggestions to HB 43 that would help Anchorage voters. He remarked that the assembly felt that previous comments by Senator Shower were valid and registration processes on the PFD should be addressed. He supported curing and tracking and opined that the witness signature without validation is simply a bar to vote. He mentioned that Anchorage has a voter signature review process unlike many other areas in Alaska.

[4:32:09 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK said that written comments can be sent in and added to the record. She also remarked on paperwork given to committee members that pertain to each of the proposed bills.

[4:32:52 PM](#)

DONNA ANDERSON, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 43. She said that she is a former educator and said that all the time she hears that the public isn't happy when the bar is lowered. She said that voting is the most important civic duty for adults. She remarked that sending stamps to adults and removing the witness signature was lowering the bar and cautioned that doing so would open the door for impropriety.

[4:33:53 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK, after ascertaining there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 43.

[4:34:33 PM](#)

AMANDA NDEMO, Staff, Representative Calvin Schrage, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Schrage, prime sponsor, read the sectional analysis for HB 43 [provided in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1 - Removes language from AS 15.05.010 requiring a qualified voter to register before an election as stipulated in AS 15.07.

Section 2 - Amends AS 15.07.060 by adding a new subsection that requires applicants who register within 30 days before an election to provide: an affidavit stating that they have established residency at least 30 days before the desired election; a copy of government issued identification that displays the applicant's Alaska residence address; or government document showing applicant's name and Alaska residence.

Section 3 - Amends AS 15.07.070(c) by adding that an applicant whose registration does not meet the requirements for placement on the master register for the next election may vote an absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot in that election.

Section 4 - Amends AS 15.07.070(d) to stipulate that a qualified voter who registers within 30 days before or on the day of an election may vote only an absentee in-person, special needs or questioned ballot at that election. It removes the language making the person ineligible to vote at that election and restricts the division from rejecting the absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot of a qualified voter who registered within 30 days of election or on the day of an election on the grounds the voter is not on an official registration list.

Section 5 - Amends AS 15.07.070(h) requiring the voter's certificate used for voting an absentee in-person or questioned ballot to include instructions that a person registering to vote using the voter's certificate and wishing to declare the person's affiliation should complete the affiliation section on

the certificate. This subsection is also amended to include special needs ballots in this requirement.

Section 6 - Amends AS 15.07.090(b) to stipulate that a person who has reregistered under this subsection may vote only an absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot until the next election occurs, at least 30 days after re-registration. The division may not reject the absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot of a qualified voter who reregisters within 30 days before election day because the voter's name is not on the official registration list.

Section 7 - Amends AS 15.07.090(c) to stipulate that if a voter's request to transfer registration is made within 30 days before or on election day, that voter may vote only in absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot. The division may not reject the ballot of a voter who satisfies these requirements on the basis that they are not on the official registration list for the election. A voter must reside in the new house district for at least 30 days to vote a ballot for that district.

Section 8 -Amends AS 15.07.090(d) to stipulate that a qualified voter who registers within 30 days of election and for whom no evidence of registration in the precinct can be found may only vote an absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot and that the division may not reject said ballot on the grounds the voter is not on the official registration list for the election.

Section 9 - Amends AS 15.07.130(e) to rename "absentee voting stations" to "early voting stations."

Section 10 - Amends AS 15.15.370 to add a stipulation requiring that, when the director of Elections publishes unofficial election results, they will include the subsequent rankings selected by the voters who ranked that candidate as the voters' first choice.

Section 11 - Amends AS 15.20.030 to include a postage-paid return envelope with the mail-in ballot and materials. It also adds space for recording the date of the voter's signature declaring the person is a qualified voter. This section prohibits the identification of a voter's party affiliation on the ballot envelope and also removes reference to the requirement of witness signatures.

Section 12 - Amends AS 15.20.045 to rename absentee voting stations as early voting stations and stipulates that the director shall provide locations

designated as early voting stations with the appropriate ballots at least 30 days before the election, in line with extending early voting options to 30 days before an election.

Section 13 - Amends AS 15.20.050 with conforming language in line with renaming absentee voting stations as early voting stations.

Section 14 - Amends AS 15.20.061 extending the period that a qualified voter may apply in person for an absentee ballot from the 15th day before an election up to and including the date of the election to on or after the 30th day.

Section 15 - Amends AS 15.20.064(a) permits a qualified voter who meets the requirements set out in this section to vote 30 days before an election or on election day.

Section 16 - Amends AS 15.20.064 to add a stipulation permitting a voter who fails to meet the voter verification requirements of this section to vote an absentee ballot.

[4:40:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked about the impact of extending early voting from 15 to 30 days and wanted clarification on how it would affect other deadlines pertaining to both political candidates and the Division of Elections.

MS. BEECHER responded that early voting would impact the 12 locations that currently have it, and early voting places are where any ballot can be cast. She said that one of the biggest impacts would be getting the ballots prepared. She opined that the withdrawal dates would be impacted, and ballots can't be completed until knowing whether a candidate has withdrawn, and it takes time to get ballots sent out. She remarked that it is a complex process, and the proposed bill would impact processing components and withdrawal dates for candidates. She said it would be a challenge for the division to start early voting sooner.

[4:43:34 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked for clarification for the 24-hour period pertaining to Section 22 of the proposed bill.

MS. BEECHER responded that based off what the bill says, it appears that the cure process would be triggered after the

absentee review board says that a ballot will be rejected. She remarked that this is what would trigger this process, and it is contingent on the timeframe of reviewing the ballots.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked about the 30-day window for people to register up to election day. She said that it could allow a tight race to stack people in the district in which a person is voting. She asked if it's possible that people could register to vote in areas they don't live.

[4:45:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor discussed and answered questions about HB 43. He remarked that concerns regarding district stacking are overstated, and it is unlikely this could occur. He said that if they are truly moving or changing location to that district, HB 43 would allow them to re-register in that 30-day period. He said it would also solve the problem of not being able to vote in a new district or old one following a moved household.

[4:47:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY raised concerns about problems with Western Alaska voting and if the bill contained components to help support these voters.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE responded that HB 43 would address the question of the witness signature. He said this was the biggest issue impacting voters for this region and the proposed bill would remove this requirement. He reaffirmed that witness signatures are not validated by the Division of Elections. He said that the bill is not removing election integrity measures, and an affidavit would still need to be signed. He also said that the bill does not address the issue of paid postage, and it is best addressed with mail carriers. He remarked that this was a challenging issue to address as a state.

[4:50:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked how ballot tracking works, and she remarked that she would prefer ballots to be anonymous. She said that a previous comment was that if ballot access is expanded then tracking would be needed.

MS BEECHER responded that currently the Division of Elections uses the myAlaska voter portal. She said when an absentee

ballot is mailed it is noted in the portal. When it is received back by the division, it is noted. Lastly, when the ballot is completed, it is noted in the portal. She said this is the extent of what the Division of Elections does for ballot tracking. She said the idea of instituting something more robust was tried with the vendor and it was difficult because of the constraints of Alaska's bandwidth. She said Alaska isn't robust enough to implement some systems. She said the bill refers to using post office barcodes, but it is not understood if the Division can read the barcode due to mailing processes.

[4:53:32 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked about the proposal pertaining to having early voting 30 days in advance and how it would affect processes in the division, including other deadlines.

MS. BEECHER responded that by statute the withdrawal date from the General Election is September 1.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked about primary elections and when they commence. She said the candidates need to wait for the count in the primary and only after the count is received will they consider continued candidacy. She raised concerns regarding deadlines interfering with one another.

MS. BEECHER responded that she was not sure about the general election and discussed the dates pertaining to the bill. She said that given current deadlines, there would not be overlap; however, the windows proposed under HB 43 would be tight for the division. She said that there is already a 45-day mandate for overseas ballots, and it is doable because of the small amount of these ballots. However, a 30-day change would make things difficult.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE remarked that some districts need ballots printed in other languages and asked if these ballots would be impacted by proposed changes in the bill.

MS. BEECHER responded that yes, they would be impacted but ballots that require other languages are sample ballots. She remarked that many ballots can't be structured to accommodate other languages, and none are used for actual voting.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE remarked that the sample ballot and standard ballot would then be the same and she could have sought

clarification regarding the printing process. She said she was trying to understand the time gap with an extension to 30 days.

MS. BEECHER responded that there are hard deadlines set within the Division of Elections that pertain to translated material for ballots. She said that she can provide a calendar that marks working deadlines in a follow-up. She remarked that given a 30-day window, the challenge for the division would be to get these things done in a tight window given other concurrent election objectives.

[4:59:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked about the proposed 30-day voting and if the division has reviewed the fiscal impact that would result from employing people longer and the feasibility of getting more employees to accommodate the extension.

MS. BEECHER responded that the division has looked at this and initially thought that the desire of the drafter was 30 days for all types of voting. She said the division has received clarification and the fiscal note would need to be adjusted. She said that poll workers and election workers are paid \$20 an hour and they usually work 12 hours a day.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked what type of incurred cost the division would have with regards to notifying the public of the change.

MS. BEECHER responded that the division has not looked at this component yet and that advertising and notifications are expensive. She said the education component is a challenge.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE added that after talking with the Division, the intent is not to include the absentee in-person sites. He referred to the fiscal note and the monetary details pertaining to the additional 15 days.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE referred to the bill's fiscal note and asked for clarification regarding the 15-day extension and why the focus is on early voting locations and not all voting locations. She remarked that her district does not have an early voting site.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE responded that other expanded access will be a decision for the committee. He said that the decision to expand early voting stemmed from the surge in demand for these

areas during the last election cycle. He said if other types of ballots are included then the division would incur additional expenses.

[5:06:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked if alternative extensions had been discussed, for example, a 5-day, 10-day, or other extensions that may not be so impactful.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE responded that the 15-day time-period is from discussions with the Division of Elections. He remarked that any extension beyond the proposed 15-days would be too laborious. He said he was open to discussion and the reason for implementing this change was a response to wait times and prior election challenges.

[5:09:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK, announced that HB 43 was held over.

[5:10:21 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.