

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 25, 2025

3:19 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Sarah Vance

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

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

HOUSE BILL NO. 104

"An Act creating and relating to the address confidentiality program; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

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

02/13/25 (H) Heard & Held
02/13/25 (H) MINUTE (STA)
03/11/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/11/25 (H) Heard & Held
03/11/25 (H) MINUTE (STA)
03/25/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

AMANDA NDEMO, Staff
Representative Carl Schrage
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the amendment process for HB 43, Version I, on behalf of Representative Schrage, prime sponsor.

CAROL BEECHER, Director
Permanent Fund Dividend Division
Department of Revenue
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions during the amendment process for HB 43, Version I.

BOB BALLINGER, Staff
Representative Sarah Vance
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during amendment discussion of HB 43, Version I, on behalf of Representative Vance, whose amendments were offered by Representative McCabe in her absence.

MICHAELA THOMPSON, Operations Manager
Division of Elections
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the amendment process for HB 43, Version I.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:19:33 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:19 p.m. Representatives McCabe, Moore,

Holland, Himschoot, Story, and Carrick were present at the call to order.

HB 43-ELECTIONS, VOTING, BALLOTS

[3:20:31 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK announced that the only 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." [Before the committee, adopted as a working document on 3/11/25, was the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 43, Version 34-LS0231\I, Dunmire, 3/10/25 ("Version I").]

[3:21:28 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK announced that the committee would entertain amendments.

[3:21:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.1, Dunmire, 3/17/25, which read as follows:

Page 3, line 25, following "supply":
Insert "proof of residency and"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

[3:22:11 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 3:22 p.m.

[3:22:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 1. He explained that the proposed amendment would add a simple but important safeguard to the voter registration process, specifically for those who register within 30 days of the election. He said the current proposed bill structure would only require a written affirmation of residency when voting. He said that the proposed amendment would require proof of residency. He said this is a common-sense conservative measure that would not be burdensome. He discussed the ways that Alaskans could illustrate residency. He remarked that adding this requirement was especially

important close to election day, a time when the Division of Elections (DOE) has limited time to verify eligibility and proper documentation would give election workers confidence that every late registration is legitimate and verifiable. It guards against potential fraud and unintentional registration errors preceding the election.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE explained that the proposed amendment was not about "making it harder to vote" but ensuring that voters are truly eligible in their respective precinct.

[3:25:21 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK asked for clarification into the current process used to validate documentation for proof of residency. She raised concerns about how that process would work and welcomed committee discussion.

[3:25:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND raised concerns about moving prior to an election and challenges when trying to get documentation to affirm residency. He said that he appreciated the intent of the proposed amendment but believed it may cause a burden for somebody who recently relocated. He believed the amendment might keep eligible voters from casting ballots.

[3:26:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE responded that as a former military member he had moved around 17 times in 20 years. He said that often the first thing he needed to purchase following relocation was electricity and by doing so it would generate a receipt. He said that this receipt was adequate documentation for establishing residency. He said it is not as difficult as one might think and noted that even a Post Office (PO) box would require residency verification.

[3:27:47 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment 1. Representatives Holland, Himschoot, Story, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 1 failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[3:28:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [2] to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.2, Dunmire, 3/17/25, which read as follows:

Page 3, line 30, through page 4, line 16:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 12:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

Page 23, line 13:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

[3:28:42 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK objected for purpose of discussion.

[3:28:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE explained that Amendment 2 would remove the provision in the bill that would require DOE to accept electronic signatures for voter registration forms submitted by mail, fax, or electronic transmission. He said that while electronic signatures have good intentions for voter accessibility, this change would introduce real security concerns. Requiring a physical or wet signature would ensure stronger voter verification. He said that physical signatures are harder to forge and easier to match to official records when needed. He said that electronic signatures were more vulnerable to problems and harder to authenticate. He said that preserving this safeguard would help maintain public trust in our system. He said that voters expect strong and transparent processes regarding voting eligibility.

[3:30:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND commented on frequent use of electronic signatures for home mortgages, refinancing or even vehicle documents. He said that he appreciates the intent of Amendment 2, however he believed it was essential to accommodate voters with the same type of electronic signatures they may have already used. He felt electronic signature accommodations were essential for rural Alaskans, who may have challenges mailing

physical signatures. He could not offer support for the proposed amendment.

[3:31:56 PM](#)

AMANDA NDEMO, Staff, Representative Carl Schrage, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Schrage, prime sponsor of HB 43, remarked that the intent was to keep electronic signatures. She remarked on security advancements regarding electronic signature authentication.

[3:32:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE affirmed that there were advancements in electronic signature security but unfortunately the State of Alaska (SOA) had not embraced them. He said that many of the electronic signatures he uses also require face recognition. He understood others even use blockchain computer technology and these additional security details were not used in Alaska. He raised concerns about electronic signatures, and that they may not be appropriate at this time.

[3:33:17 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection.

[3:33:19 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment 2. Representatives Story, Holland, Himschoot, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 2 failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[3:34:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [3] to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.3, Dunmire, 3/17/25, which read as follows:

Page 4, line 17, through page 5, line 3:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 12:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

Page 23, line 13:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for purpose of discussion.

[3:34:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE explained that Amendment 3 would remove the provision from the bill that would have allowed individuals who submit incomplete or untimely voter registration forms to still cast a ballot in elections, specifically in an absentee, special needs, or question ballot. He reiterated that SOA elections rely on order, predictability, and fairness. He said this is why there are registration deadlines; to ensure each voter is properly verified before voting. He said that the provision would create an exception. He said that it undermines the integrity of the registration system and puts unnecessary pressure on election officials. He opined that a message needed to be sent to voters that deadlines matter and every voter is responsible for registration. He said that Amendment 3 would uphold this principle and ensure that only qualified and timely registered Alaskans can vote in an election, without exception.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said that Amendment 3 would also help eliminate confusion at the polls and protect the integrity of the voter roll by closing potential loopholes. He concluded by saying that the proposed amendment was about maintaining a fair and orderly election.

[3:36:14 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK remarked that she understood that there were some policy differences regarding various provisions in HB 43. She offered her understanding that if the legislation established a process where an individual might be able to contact the division and have a ballot curing process, it would be unreasonable to not allow votes for reasonable and small mistakes on registration forms. She did not support the exclusion of this provision in HB 43 and did not support the proposed amendment.

[3:37:41 PM](#)

MS. NDEMO expressed support for Chair Carrick's remarks.

[3:38:05 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment 3. Representatives Himschoot, Story, Holland, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 3 failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[3:38:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [4] to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.4, Dunmire, 3/17/25, which read as follows:

Page 5, lines 4 - 17:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 12:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

Page 23, line 13:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

[3:38:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE explained that Amendment 4 would remove language in the bill that would have allowed same-day voter registration. He said this meant that someone could register to vote on election day and still cast a ballot, including an absentee, in-person, special needs, or question ballot. He said that the proposed amendment would reinforce Alaska's long-standing voter registration deadline of thirty days before an election. He said it would ensure that voter rolls would be complete and accurate prior to ballots being cast. He said that allowing same-day registration sounds convenient, but it opens the door to impropriety, especially when election workers are already at maximum capacity. He cautioned that rushing the process could increase the chance of mistakes or even fraud.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE reiterated that it is important to protect election integrity. He said that same-day registration would create a two-tiered system, one for those who registered on time

and another for those who did not. He raised concerns that this would undermine trust in the voting process. He said that the proposed amendment would not make it harder to vote; it would simply reinforce the importance of being prepared and registering in a timely manner as other Alaskans do.

[3:40:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY remarked that she was opposed to Amendment 4. She remarked on same-day registration availability with presidential elections and opined that Alaskans should afford the same privileges for state elections.

[3:41:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND remarked that the current bill language clarifies that the person is voting only an absentee, in-person, special needs, or question ballot and SOA would have controls to what ballot would be used. This control would help with any questions or traceability concerns of the voter. He was opposed to the proposed amendment.

[3:42:35 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection.

[3:43:00 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK voided the initial roll call vote begun and ask the secretary to start over.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment 4. Representatives Holland, Himschoot, Story, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 4 failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[3:43:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment 5 to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.5, Dunmire, 3/18/25, which read as follows:

Page 5, following line 29:

Insert new bill sections to read:

"* Sec. 8. AS 15.07.070(i) is amended to read:

(i) The division may [SHALL] register voters or update information for voters who indicate on [SUBMIT]

an application to receive a permanent fund dividend submitted in accordance with (j) - (m) of this section that the voter wants to register to vote or update the voter's information.

* **Sec. 9.** AS 15.07.070(j) is amended to read:

(j) The division shall cooperate with the Department of Revenue under AS 43.23.101 to ensure that the permanent fund dividend application form furnished by the Department of Revenue under AS 43.23.015 allows an applicant, a person who is designated in a power of attorney to act on behalf of an applicant, or a person acting on behalf of a physically disabled applicant to submit voter registration information required under AS 15.07.060(a)(1) - (4) and (7) - (9), and an attestation that such information is true. The director may require proof of identification of the applicant, if not already in the Department of Revenue's possession, as required by regulations adopted by the director under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act). Voter information obtained from the Department of Revenue may not be added to the master register before the division has determined that the applicant is eligible to vote.

* **Sec. 10.** AS 15.07.070(k) is amended to read:

(k) Immediately upon [UPON] receipt of the registration information, the director shall [, AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH A SCHEDULE ESTABLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR BY RULE,] notify by United States mail and any other means authorized by the director, each applicant not already registered to vote at the address provided in the applicant's application

(1) of the processes to
(A) decline to be registered as a voter;
(B) maintain an existing voter registration or be newly registered at a valid place of residence not provided in the applicant's application; and

(C) adopt a political party affiliation;
[AND]

(2) that failure to respond to the notification shall constitute the applicant's consent to cancel any registration to vote in another jurisdiction; and

(3) that the applicant's information must be verified by the division before the applicant's name can be placed on the master register.

* **Sec. 11.** AS 15.07.070(1) is amended to read:

(1) If an applicant does not decline to be registered as a voter within 30 calendar days after the director issues the notification, the application under AS 43.23.015 will constitute a completed registration form. The name of the applicant shall be placed on the master register if the director determines **within 30 days after submission of the registration form** that the person is qualified to vote under AS 15.05.010, and the director shall forward to the applicant a registration card. If registration is denied, the applicant shall immediately be informed in writing that registration was denied, [AND] the reason for denial, **steps the applicant may take to correct the registration, and contact information for an employee of the division that can provide assistance and additional information to the applicant.**"

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 12:

Delete "sec. 42"

Insert "sec. 46"

Page 23, line 13:

Delete "sec. 42"

Insert "sec. 46"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for purpose of discussion.

[3:43:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 5. He said that it would make important clarifying changes on how voter registration is handled through the permanent fund dividend (PFD) application process. He said that Alaskans value both convenience and integrity in elections and the proposed amendment helps strike a balance. He said that Amendment 5 would make it clear that registering to vote through the PFD application is an opt-in process - not automatic. It would require DOE to register a person only if they indicate that they want to be registered.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said that he was reminded of a specific instance where Ukrainian refugees in Alaska were eligible for a PFD but not to vote were surprised to find that they had been added to the voter roll and could cast a ballot. He said that

Amendment 5 attempts to address this issue. Amendment 5 would require DOE to verify a person's eligibility before placing them on the state's voter roll, which Representative McCabe called a common-sense safeguard to ensure only qualified voters are added to rolls.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE stated that the proposed amendment would improve transparency by requiring DOE to notify PFD applicants who are not registered to voter and provide for remediation. Furthermore, the amendment would help ensure that Alaskans are making informed decisions when using their PFD form to update voter registration, including address changes or even party details. He said that the proposed amendment was a clean-up amendment that protects voter choice and enhances election integrity.

[3:45:57 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK asked whether there would be a fiscal impact associated with voter roll verification and requiring verification prior to being added to state voter rolls.

[3:46:25 PM](#)

CAROL BEECHER, Director, Permanent Fund Dividend Division, Department of Revenue, responded that changes could possibly incur a programming cost to accommodate the new functions, but she did not imagine that it would be a lot.

[3:47:26 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked Ms. Beecher whether she could speak about the steps that were currently taken to review and verify information that comes from the PFD prior to adding applicants to state voter rolls.

MS. BEECHER responded that to her understanding, when DOE receives PFD information, applications are sorted by new applicants, and they must have noted that they are a U.S. citizen and 18 years of age or older. She said that after applicants have been sorted, information is sent to the applicant.

[3:48:56 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection to Amendment 5. She remarked that voter registration systems tied into the PFD

process have given voting opportunity to a considerable number of Alaskans. She raised concern that removing this could be a potential barrier to voting access.

[3:49:44 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment 5. Representatives Story, Holland, Himschoot, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 5 failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[3:50:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [6] to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.7, Dunmire, 3/20/25, which read as follows:

Page 5, following line 29:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* **Sec. 8.** AS 15.07.070 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

(n) The division may use information provided by the Department of Revenue under AS 43.23.015 and 43.23.101 only to register a voter and conduct voter roll maintenance. The division may not disclose personally identifiable information obtained from the Department of Revenue.

(o) The division, in cooperation with the Department of Revenue, shall submit an annual report to the governor and to the senate secretary and chief clerk of the house of representatives on or before the first day of each regular session of the legislature and notify the legislature that the report is available. The report shall detail

(1) the number of permanent fund dividend applicant records shared with the division;

(2) the effect that shared permanent fund dividend applications had on voter roll maintenance under (n) of this section and on election integrity; and

(3) security measures taken to protect voter information.

(p) In this section, "voter roll maintenance" includes confirming the residency of a registered voter, identifying duplicate registrations, detecting voters who have moved, and detecting voters who are ineligible to vote under AS 15.05."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, following line 8:

Insert new bill sections to read:

"* **Sec. 51.** AS 43.23.101 is amended to read:

Sec. 43.23.101. Voter registration. Each month, the [THE] commissioner shall [ESTABLISH BY RULE A SCHEDULE BY WHICH THE COMMISSIONER WILL PROVIDE, AND SHALL] provide [AS SOON AS IS PRACTICABLE] the director of elections with the following information for each permanent fund dividend applicant:

(1) the electronic record [RECORDS FROM THE PERMANENT FUND DIVIDEND APPLICATIONS] of the information required by AS 15.07.060(a)(1) - (4) and (7) - (9) [,] and the attestation that the [SUCH] information is true; [, FOR EACH PERMANENT FUND DIVIDEND APPLICANT WHO

(A) IS A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES; AND

(B) IS AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE OR WILL BE WITHIN 90 DAYS OF THE DATE OF THE APPLICATION; AND]

(2) the applicant's mailing address;

(3) the applicant's affirmation of residency;

(4) indication of the applicant's voter registration status, if known; and

(5) whether the applicant has claimed residency in another state [ADDRESSES FOR ALL PERMANENT FUND DIVIDEND APPLICANTS].

* **Sec. 52.** AS 43.23.101 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

(b) The commissioner shall develop security protocols that ensure data required to be stored or transferred under this section is securely stored or transferred.

(c) In cooperation with the division of elections under AS 15.07.070(o), the commissioner shall submit an annual report to the governor and to the senate secretary and chief clerk of the house of representatives on or before the first day of each regular session of the legislature and notify the legislature that the report is available."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 9:

Delete "AS 29.26.050(a)(3) is"

Insert "AS 15.07.064(g) and AS 29.26.050(a) (3)
are"

Page 23, line 12:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 43"

Page 23, line 13:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 43"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

[3:50:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 6. He explained that the proposed amendment would enable the Department of Revenue (DOR) and the Division of Elections (DOE) to work together more effectively by using limited PFD application data to help register voters and maintain a cleaner voter roll. He said that every year the state collects valuable information from Alaskans via the PFD process that includes residency status, mailing addresses, and voter registration preferences. The amendment would allow that data to be used carefully and securely for election purposes. It would allow DOE to use the information to confirm voter eligibility, detect duplicates, and identify individuals who may have moved or become ineligible to vote.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE remarked that Amendment 6 has strict safeguards in place. It would prevent the disclosure of personal information and DOR must use secure protocols to transmit data. Additionally, both departments must produce an annual report for the Governor and the Legislature detailing how the information is used, how it impacts election integrity, and what security measures are in place.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE remarked that given the previous amendment proposals, there was concern regarding how PFD's are being handled for voter registration, and the way data was being handled. He reminded the committee of the large numbers of people on the state voter roll that were ineligible to vote. He concluded by stating that Amendment 6 would strengthen Alaska's elections and ensure state agencies work together.

[3:52:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked whether there was any data and documented information about the PFD registration process creating a problem in terms of who is on the voter rolls.

[3:53:16 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER, in response to Representative Holland's question, said that DOE was not aware of individuals that were erroneously added to voter rolls by the PFD voter registration process.

[3:54:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE asked Ms. Beecher how many "excess" people were currently registered on voter rolls. He said that he had heard that it was one of the larger rolls in the nation and larger than the state population itself; around 111 percent of the population.

MS. BEECHER said that she took offense to the word "excess" and to her understanding, the names on the voter rolls were accurate.

[3:54:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND called a point of order. He said that he did not believe that this dialogue was appropriate in the committee process and it was a deviation from the discussion on the proposed amendment.

[3:55:27 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:55 p.m. to 3:56 p.m.

[3:56:52 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER, in response to a previous question from Representative McCabe, said that the percentage that he was citing was from a calculation of how many people are registered to vote as opposed to how many people live in Alaska. She said that the percentage was not an accurate reflection since an individual does not have to live in the state under current law to be registered to vote. She said that the number of registered voters compared to individuals living in the state would have a higher percentage. She said people could live overseas or even out-of-state with intent to return to be eligible for voting.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE responded that he was happy that this was clarified on the record.

[3:58:04 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment [6]. Representatives Himschoot, Story, Holland, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment [6] failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[3:58:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [7] to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.8, Dunmire, 3/17/25, which read as follows:

Page 6, lines 1 - 2:

Delete "**an absentee in-person, special needs, or**"

Insert "**a**"

Page 6, lines 4 - 7:

Delete "**The division may not reject the absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot of a qualified voter who reregisters within 30 days before or on the day of an election on the grounds that the voter is not on the official registration list for the election.**"

Page 6, line 8, through page 7, line 4:

Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 12:

Delete "sec. 42"

Insert "sec. 40"

Page 23, line 13:

Delete "sec. 42"

Insert "sec. 40"

[3:58:52 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 7. He said that it would remove language from HB 43 that would allow same-day voter registration, which would allow someone to register on the same day of elections and cast a ballot. He said that allowing same-day registration seems convenient, but it opens the door to rushed processing, increased administrative pressure on election workers, and potential challenges in verifying voter eligibility. He said that Alaska has long required that voters register at least thirty days before an election and it has given election officials the time needed to confirm voter identity, residency, and eligibility. He said the proposed amendment promotes fairness and that every voter should play by the same set of rules. Making an exception for late registrants creates a two-tiered system; one for those who plan and another for those who wait till the last minute. He concluded by remarking that Amendment 7 would help protect election integrity.

[4:00:03 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK asked for clarification on whether Amendment 7 would delete the sections of HB 43 that allow same-day registration and whether this was the intent. She said this may be a good question for the amendment sponsors staff.

[4:00:58 PM](#)

BOB BALLINGER, Staff, Representative Sarah Vance, Alaska State Legislature, in response to Chair Carrick, confirmed that under Amendment 7, if transferring into another district it would require being in that district for 30 days. He said if this language was adopted there would not be same day registration.

[4:02:06 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection.

[4:02:37 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment 7. Representatives Holland, Himschoot, Story, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 7 failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[4:03:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE noted in the last hour, President Trump signed an executive order to protect the integrity of elections in the United States. He said that the order strengthens voter citizenship verification and bans foreign nationals from interfering in elections. It requires voter-verifiable paper ballots and not ballots which the counted vote is contained within a bar code or QQR code. He said that failure to comply with these federal directives could result in a loss of federal funding to support Alaska elections. He remarked that many of the proposed amendments have been trying to match federal directive. He noted that the executive order is two pages long.

[4:04:34 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK noted that many recent Executive Orders have been tied up in court and may not be immediately relevant.

[4:05:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [8] to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.9, Dunmire, 3/18/25, which read as follows:

Page 7, line 6:

Delete "Periodically, at times of the director's choosing, but **not** [NO] less frequently than"

Insert "**Quarterly, beginning** [PERIODICALLY, AT TIMES OF THE DIRECTOR'S CHOOSING, BUT NO LESS FREQUENTLY THAN]"

Page 7, line 18:

Delete "two general elections"

Insert "[TWO] general **election** [ELECTIONS]"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for purpose of discussion.

[4:05:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 8. He said the proposed amendment would strengthen the review and cleanup of Alaska's voter rolls with two important changes to Alaska Statute (AS). First, it changes the timeline for reviewing Alaska's voter registration database. Instead of reviewing the database every two years, it would be conducted quarterly. The second change proposed in the amendment would allow DOE to remove voters from the rolls after missing one general election and failing to respond to a confirmation notice, rather than

waiting for two missed elections. He opined that this would be a more timely and effective approach.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE explained that both changes would ensure that voter rolls are current, accurate, and secure. The proposed amendment would reduce administrative waste and help election officials focus on serving eligible individuals.

[4:06:52 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK asked Ms. Beecher what the potential cost might be to implement quarterly reviews of the voter registration database.

[4:07:13 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER responded that DOE conducts mandated list maintenance annually. Furthermore, she said that DOE is continuously updating and maintaining their voter rolls based on information that DOE receives. She could not approximate the cost of implementing quarterly reviews but suspected it may have costs associated with mailing notices and voting cards.

[4:08:10 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK asked for clarification that the current legislation would require annual reviews, and the proposed amendment would require four quarterly reviews.

MS. BEECHER responded that this was a correct understanding of the proposed amendment.

[4:08:28 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Beecher how much staffing power it would take to conduct quarterly reviews.

MS. BEECHER directed the question to Michaela Thompson.

[4:08:59 PM](#)

MICHAELA THOMPSON, Operations Manager, Division of Elections, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, responded that there are steps that are required to conduct reviews. She said that it would require additional work to process mailing lists more frequently and keeping track of the different mailers.

[4:10:02 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked when conducting annual reviews whether there was anything that might be improved to conduct reviews more frequently.

MS. BEECHER directed the question to Ms. Thompson.

MS. THOMPSON responded that DOE could get responses from maintenance mailers and DOE was working on the voter list all throughout the year. She said that she did not have any statistics readily available.

[4:11:27 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment 8. Representatives Holland, Story, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment [8] failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-3.

[4:12:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [9] to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.10, Dunmire, 3/18/25, which read as follows:

Page 10, line 4:
Delete "At each polling place"
Insert "If requested"

Page 10, lines 9 - 15:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 12:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

Page 23, line 13:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

[4:12:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 9. He said that the proposed amendment would address two distinct, but important issues related to how elections are administered. First, it would change the requirement for language assistance at polling places. Rather than mandating bilingual materials and support at every location, the amendment would allow those services to be provided if requested. This would ensure that voting needs are still being met while being responsible with their staffing and resources. Second, the amendment would remove a provisions that would allow a person who votes a question ballot to still retain and return their absentee ballot. This creates the potential for confusion or abuse by allowing someone to submit two ballots in the same election. The proposed amendment would reinforce the notion of "one vote, one ballot" and ensure that the voting system is clean and consistent. Together the changes would ensure a more secure and cost-effective election process while still meeting the needs of Alaskan voters.

[4:13:18 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK asked Mr. Ballinger, at what time in the voting process is it envisioned that a voter would request the language assistance.

MR. BALLINGER responded that he did not know what the timeline may be but there is a federal law that requires certain languages to be included. He believed there are around thirteen different languages that are required for elections. He said the intent of the amendment is to maintain the standard but not be required to provide the material at every polling place when it may not be warranted.

[4:14:41 PM](#)

MS. NDEMO asked whether there would be any changes to how a non-English speaker might request a ballot.

MS. BEECHER responded that current language requirements were subject to federal law. This law determines what languages are required for every state and their specific regions. This is based on federal formula that is used to determine which languages are required and where they are required. She said that currently the state is required to do about four languages and there were additional languages pursuant to a court case. She said that languages are specific to regions where there was

limited English proficiency. She said that language assistance was not currently required across the entire state.

[4:16:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY commented that she was not in support of removing language assistance from polling locations.

[4:17:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND commented that he would like to keep language assistance as well.

[4:17:48 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection to Amendment 9.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives McCabe and Moore voted in favor of Amendment [9]. Representatives Holland, Himschoot, Story, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment [9] failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[4:18:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [10] to HB 43, Version I, labeled 34-LS0231\I.11, Dunmire, 3/18/25, which read as follows:

Page 11, line 25:

Delete "with the assistance"

Insert "under [WITH] the observance [ASSISTANCE]"

Page 11, line 28:

Delete "assist"

Insert "observe"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 10. He said the proposed amendment would make a small but important change to clarify the role of election observers doing ballot counting. Under current language observers are described as assisting election officials and this language could be interpreted to mean they are actively engaged in handling ballots. It would make it clear that observers are there to watch and not handle ballots, or take part in counting. The proposed amendment would protect the chain of custody for Alaska's ballots and ensure

that only trained election workers are involved in the tabulation process by defining those roles in AS. He explained that this was a straightforward amendment that strengthens public trust by reinforcing best practices in election integrity.

[4:19:34 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked for clarification to what "assist" means and whether it could involve a hands-on roll when handling ballots.

MS. BEECHER responded that DOE interprets "assist" to mean observe.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT offered her understanding that the actual practice is to observe.

MS. BEECHER confirmed that is correct.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT surmised that given Amendment 5, nothing would change but the definitions would be made clearer.

MS. BEECHER confirmed that is correct.

[4:20:32 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK removed her objection to Amendment 10. There being no further objection, Amendment 10 was adopted.

[4:20:47 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment 11 to HB 43, Version I, as amended, labeled 34-LS0231\I.12, Dunmire, 3/18/25, which read as follows:

Page 12, line 1, following "absentee":
Insert ", special needs,"

Page 12, line 7:
Delete "may"
Insert "shall"

Page 14, line 19:
Delete "30th [15TH]"
Insert "15th"

Page 14, line 20:

Delete "and including"

Insert "the fifth day before [AND INCLUDING]"

Page 14, line 21:

Delete "30th [15TH]"

Insert "15th"

Page 14, line 24:

Delete "30th [15TH]"

Insert "15th"

Page 14, following line 26:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* **Sec. 32.** AS 15.20.072(c) is amended to read:

(c) If the request for a special needs ballot is made through a representative, the representative shall sign a register provided by an election official. The representative must be a family member, legal guardian, or caregiver of the voter and may not serve as a representative to more than five voters in an election. The register must include the following information:

- (1) the representative's name;
- (2) the representative's residence and mailing address;
- (3) the representative's social security number, voter identification number, or date of birth;
- (4) the name of the voter on whose behalf the representative is requesting a ballot and voting materials;
- (5) an oath that the representative
 - (A) is receiving a ballot and voting materials on behalf of the voter;
 - (B) will not vote the ballot for the voter;
 - (C) will not coerce or materially interfere with the voter;
 - (D) will not represent more than five voters for the current election;
 - (E) will not divulge the vote cast by the voter; and
 - (F) [(E)] has been notified that unlawful interference with voting is punishable under AS 15.56.030 and 15.56.035;
- (6) the representative's signature."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 14, lines 28 - 31:

Delete all material and insert:

"(h) The division may not reject a voter's special needs ballot based on an error made by an election official or representative on the register under (c) of this section or an error made by a representative under (d) of this section if the voter cures the error under AS 15.20.222."

Page 23, line 12:

Delete "sec. 42"

Insert "sec. 43"

Page 23, line 13:

Delete "sec. 42"

Insert "sec. 43"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 11. He said the proposed amendment provides essential updates to the special needs voting process, updates that protect both the voter and the integrity of the election. First, it would ensure that the ballot curing process originally designed for absentee ballots also apply to special needs ballots. Second, it would tighten the rules for those who can serve as a representative for special needs voters, requiring them to be a family member or guardian, not just anyone. It would also place a cap on how many times a representative can sign-off on special needs ballots to five per election. Furthermore, it would require a signed oath to prevent voter coercion or interference. He said this would make elections more transparent and trustworthy. Lastly, the amendment would resolve inconsistencies in ballot curing deadlines by aligning the state with a 15-day mark to ensure clarity for voters and election officials. He said that without this amendment the state cannot provide the same level of ballot curing across the board.

[4:22:54 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK remarked that she liked the sections of the proposed amendment that amend the audit procedures and require that special needs ballots are included in audits. She opined that it seemed to be a reasonable provision, and the adoption of other additional audit procedures seemed to have good

intentions. She said that the time frame concerned her regarding implementing these procedures.

[4:23:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said that she was concerned with limiting the eligible representatives for special needs ballots. She said that in many places in Alaska, a family member may not be able to serve as a representative.

[4:24:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said that anybody with special needs would likely have a caregiver, whether it was family or someone that cares for them on a regular schedule. He remarked that one of his friends has about 5 different Veteran Affairs (VA) patients that they take care of throughout a week, as a caregiver.

[4:25:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY recalled a woman in late pregnancy, who received a special needs ballot. She recalled that she was a single mom and did not have any family around. She said there are other circumstances when using these ballots that may not be fully considered. She expressed hesitation given the adoption of changes to special needs ballots.

[4:25:52 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK remarked that if a caregiver had six patients, the current language in the bill would only allow voting representation for five individuals. She expressed concern that the cap might be a challenge for individuals.

[4:26:19 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Beecher whether the timeline for requesting a special needs ballot at 15 days was enough for the DOE to make accommodation for the voter.

MS. BEECHER responded that the timeframe for getting ballots ready can be an issue for DOE. She said that getting ballots to different locations in the state and allowing them to have ballots on time was a division goal. She remarked that preparing, shipping, and receiving all the ballots was a logistical issue for the division.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT said it would be a challenge to have ballots prepared thirty days in advance.

MS. BEECHER responded that this was correct. To have a ballot prepared there was a specific timeframe between the primary and general election. She said that candidates that withdraw can create challenges for preparing ballots.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked whether there was any feedback that any special needs voters had struggled with the fifteen-day deadline. She said that convenience for the DOE was one thing, but meeting voter needs was another.

[4:29:24 PM](#)

MS. THOMPSON responded that she was not aware of any specific instances of challenges with special needs ballots and the timeline. She said a thirty-day option was not available and there was an absentee application process that may require an individual to have a ballot earlier than fifteen days before an election.

[4:30:09 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection because of the special needs ballots language.

[4:30:36 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment 11. Representatives Holland, Himschoot, Story, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 11 failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[4:31:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [12] to HB 43, Version I, as amended, labeled 34-LS0231\I.13, Dunmire, 3/18/25, which read as follows:

Page 13, line 9:
Delete "**30th** [15TH]"
Insert "15th"

Page 13, line 9:
Delete "and including"
Insert "**five days before** [AND INCLUDING]"

Page 14, line 4:
Delete "20th [15TH]"
Insert "15th"

Page 14, line 5:
Delete "and including"
Insert "five days before [AND INCLUDING]"

Page 14, line 10:
Delete "20 [15]"
Insert "15"
Delete "on"
Insert "up to five days before [ON]"

Page 14, line 24:
Delete "30th [15TH]"
Insert "15th"

Page 14, line 25:
Delete "and including"
Insert "five days before [AND INCLUDING]"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of objection.

[4:31:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 12. He said the proposed amendment addresses the early voting timeline to create a more secure and efficient election process. First, it would reduce the early voting period from thirty days prior to an election to fifteen days prior to an election. He said this was still plenty of time for Alaskans to cast a ballot in advance and would reduce the work window for election staff. Second is that it would establish a five-day pause between the close of early voting and election day. This window would allow DOE to finalize preparations, review voter rolls, organize ballots, and ensure precincts are ready for elections. By changing the timeline, the proposed amendment would prevent errors, improve ballot security, and give election officials time needed to perform well.

[4:32:27 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK noted that the current Committee Substitute (CS) [current version of HB 43] had brought the original bill sponsors language from thirty days to twenty days for early

voting. She considered this adequate "middle ground" for accommodating early voting. She said that her precinct of Fairbanks had considerable early voting interest. She said many people perceive election day as having waiting times and delays to cast a ballot. She did not think that "walking back" to the status quo was necessary given interest in early voting.

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection.

[4:33:50 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment [12]. Representatives Story, Holland, Himschoot, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment [12] failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[4:34:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [13] to HB 43, Version I, as amended, labeled 34-LS0231\I.14, Dunmire, 3/17/25, which read as follows:

Page 16, lines 18 - 27:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 12:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

Page 23, line 13:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

[4:34:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 13. He explained that the proposed amendment would remove a provision that would have allowed absentee ballots to be counted before the close of polls on election day. He said that he appreciates the intent to speed up election reporting, however, he opined that this approach creates risk to election security and public confidence. Counting ballots early, even if totals are not yet released can lead to leaks, speculation, or even strategic

manipulation of voter turnout that undermines faith in the voting process. The amendment would ensure that all ballots, absentee or otherwise, are counted only after polls close. He said this is the voting standard.

[4:35:34 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK said that the proposed bill language was included partially due to the request from many constituents from her district who were concerned about the long time to get voting results after polls close. She did not offer support for Amendment 13.

[4:36:45 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said that one thing that has bothered him about Alaska elections, specifically presidential elections, was that everybody reports in. This included New Hampshire, Illinois and even Iowa. He said some people look at the reports and question whether going to the polls is worth it. It has created an "artificial pressure" with people going to vote whom suspect they already know the results. He opined that this was an issue and did not want to see it take place in local elections.

CHAIR CARRICK said that results would not be released until the polls are closed. She did not see Representative McCabe's concerns are valid and comparable.

[4:39:09 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment [13]. Representatives Himschoot, Story, Holland, Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment [13] failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[4:39:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [14] to HB 43, Version I, as amended, labeled 34-LS0231\I.15, Dunmire, 3/18/25, which read as follows:

Page 16, line 29, through page 18, line 14:
Delete all material and insert:

"(b) An absentee ballot must be rejected [MAY NOT BE COUNTED] if

(1) the voter has failed to properly execute the certificate;

(2) [AN OFFICIAL OR THE WITNESSES AUTHORIZED BY LAW TO ATTEST THE VOTER'S CERTIFICATE FAIL TO EXECUTE THE CERTIFICATE, EXCEPT THAT AN ABSENTEE BALLOT CAST IN PERSON AND ACCEPTED BY AN ABSENTEE VOTING OFFICIAL OR ELECTION SUPERVISOR MAY BE COUNTED DESPITE FAILURE OF THE ABSENTEE VOTING OFFICIAL OR ELECTION SUPERVISOR TO PROPERLY SIGN AND DATE THE VOTER'S CERTIFICATE AS ATTESTING OFFICIAL AS REQUIRED UNDER AS 15.20.061(c);

(3) THE BALLOT IS NOT ATTESTED ON OR BEFORE THE DATE OF THE ELECTION;

(4) the ballot envelope and certificate, if delivered by mail after the day of the election [POSTMARKED],

(A) is not postmarked or is postmarked after [ON OR BEFORE] the date of the election and is not marked with a United States Postal Service tracking barcode sufficient to verify that the ballot was mailed on or before the day of the election or with a division of elections ballot tracking barcode sufficient to verify that the ballot was mailed on or before the day of the election;

(B) has a United States Postal Service tracking barcode verifying that the ballot was mailed after the date of the election or a division of elections ballot tracking barcode verifying that the ballot was mailed after the date of the election; or

(C) is executed after the date of the election;

(3) [(5)] after the day of election, the ballot was delivered by a means other than mail;

(4) [OR (6)] the voter voted

(A) in person and is a

(i) first-time voter who initially registered by mail or by facsimile or other electronic transmission approved by the director under AS 15.07.050, has not provided the identification required by AS 15.15.225(a), was not eligible for waiver of the identification requirement under AS 15.15.225(b), and has not provided the identifiers required in AS 15.07.060(a)(2) and (3) that can be verified through state agency records described in AS 15.07.055(e); or

(ii) voter other than one described in (i) of this subparagraph, did not provide identification described in AS 15.15.225(a), was not personally known by the election official, and has not provided the identifiers required in AS 15.07.060(a)(2) and (3); or

(B) by mail or electronic transmission, is a first-time voter who initially registered by mail or by facsimile or other electronic transmission approved by the director under AS 15.07.050 to vote, has not met the identification requirements set out in AS 15.07.060, and does not submit with the ballot a copy of a

(i) driver's license, state identification card, current and valid photo identification, birth certificate, passport, or **identification card issued by a federally recognized tribe** [HUNTING OR FISHING LICENSE]; or

(ii) current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document; an item described in this sub-subparagraph must show the name and current address of the voter **and be dated within 45 days of receipt of the absentee ballot; or**

(5) the voter did not vote absentee in person and the signature on the certificate is inconsistent with the voter's signature in voter registration records."

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

[4:39:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 14. The proposed amendment would provide a thorough cleanup and clarification of Alaska's voter identification and absentee ballot procedures. It would lay out clear, enforceable reasons why an absentee ballot must be rejected, whether it was a missing signature, late postmark or lack of identification (ID) for a first-time voter. These changes help ensure that every ballot counted meets the legal standards that have been set in the state. He said that it would strengthen voter ID requirements, particularly for those voting by mail or electronically for the first time. These voters must provide appropriate documentation to confirm identity much like voting in person. He said that the proposed amendment would also remove ambiguity in law, instead of stating that a ballot "may be counted" it would now say "it must be rejected" when clear violations occur. He said

it would give election officials clear directive to uphold the law fairly and consistently.

[4:41:00 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked whether postal service barcode tracking was available throughout Alaska and whether this included rural U.S. Post Offices.

MS. BEECHER responded that it was not possible for United States Postal Service (USPS) barcodes to be read in rural areas. She noted that there was only one central mail processing facility in the state and it is in Anchorage. Additionally, there was a smaller processing facility to read barcodes in Juneau.

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked whether rural post offices could apply the bar code at the time of mailing and not necessarily whether they could read the codes or not.

MS. BEECHER responded that rural post offices did not have the ability to apply tracking bar codes to mail.

[4:42:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE asked for clarification about whether the barcodes were already attached to envelopes.

MS. BEECHER responded that the bar codes are attached to the Anchorage postal facility.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE remarked that his printer could print bar codes on an envelope and said that he was curious about whether there were bar codes on envelopes used by DOE. He remarked that one of his constituents had found a red bag on the side of the road that had ballot materials from one of the villages, it was reported that there was a bar code on the bag.

MS. BEECHER said that Ms. Thompson could describe the process better.

[4:44:13 PM](#)

MS. THOMPSON responded that DOE uses flat envelopes to send in the mail and currently prints an outgoing barcode on the envelope near the voters information. She said that DOE can use that information to track the voters ballots using the USPS

system. She noted that that the polling places use a different type of mail than absentee ballots which go through bulk mail.

[4:45:35 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK remarked that the proposed bill as currently written would remove the witness signature requirement. She said that given previous discussions, the witness signature was meaningless without DOE verification. She said that Amendment 14 would require the same voter signature on both the ballot and the registration.

CHAIR CARRICK asked that since DOE does not verify witness signatures whether there would be an additional workload to verify signatures on both a voter registration and a ballot. Second, she asked whether DOE would know if two signatures were simply different in appearance or subject to impropriety.

MS. BEECHER responded that witness signatures are implicated by law and falsifying this information would break the law by committing perjury. She compared witness signatures to oaths taken by legislators. She said that there is an underlying assumption that people would do this correctly even without a verification process. She said that the DOE does not currently have the equipment or training to validate signatures.

[4:49:16 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK asked whether Ms. Beecher knew what the workload would look like if DOE was to cross-compare signatures.

MS. BEECHER responded that it would require witness verification training and possibly require additional equipment.

[4:49:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said to his understanding the proposed amendment pertains to missing signatures and not just unverifiable signatures. He said that nobody would expect the DOE to compare every signature for anomalies. He said that Mr. Ballinger may be able to speak to the amendment more.

[4:50:46 PM](#)

MR. BALLINGER said that the conversation of signature verification took place and the expense associated with it would be too much. The amendment would simply require a witness

signature. He said that the amendment was not a substantial amount of additional language but placing some previous voting requirements back into the proposed bill.

[4:51:26 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE clarified that all the amendment would do is require the inclusion of a witness signature.

MR. BALLINGER commented that this was the correct understanding of the proposed amendment. He said that voters would still have an opportunity to cure the ballot if a witness signature was not included.

[4:52:21 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK maintained her objection.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Moore and McCabe voted in favor of Amendment [14]. Representatives Holland, Himschoot, Story, and Carrick voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 14 failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-4.

[4:53:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE moved to adopt Amendment [15] to HB 43, Version I, as amended, labeled 34-LS0231\I.16, Dunmire, 3/17/25, which read as follows:

Page 19, line 20, through page 20, line 3:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 12:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

Page 23, line 13:
Delete "sec. 42"
Insert "sec. 41"

[4:53:13 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE spoke to Amendment 15. He said that it would remove language from the bill that would authorize the use of ballot drop boxes in Alaska. He said that while they appear convenient, they have increasingly become a source of concern for both election officials and the public. He said that ballot drop boxes increase the risk of ballot tampering and erode confidence in the voting process. The amendment would ensure that ballots are returned through more secure verifiable methods either by-mail or in person at official polling locations where proper oversight exists. He said it would also reduce strain on election officials by reducing the logistical and security measures taken to deploy the drop boxes. He concluded by commenting that Alaskans deserve to know that every ballot is handled securely and lawfully.

[4:54:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND commented that he appreciated being able to find drop boxes and he was reluctant to see them removed given the proposed amendment. He was curious whether the drop boxes would still be allowed given the amendments language. He said that it seems as if the amendment would create a mandate to drop box use. He asked whether pre-existing drop boxes could still exist at the discretion of DOE.

CHAIR CARRICK believed that this amendment would not change Anchorage's drop boxes for municipal races or for a municipality to adopt drop boxes.

MS. BEECHER said currently the division does not have drop boxes. She said that boxes were borrowed for the 2020 election cycle for the purposes of election support during the Covid-19 pandemic. She said that the bill would not impact the division, and she did not believe that DOE would be precluded. She said that given the postage paid return envelopes for absentee voters, the post office may be more convenient than a drop box.

[4:56:16 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK said that she supported Amendment 15 because of the inclusion in legislation of pre-paid postage. It would essentially give voters all the tools they need to return ballots. She said that there is some interest in specific communities given the inclusion of drop boxes, including Anchorage.

[4:57:17 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK removed her objection to Amendment 15. There being no further objection, Amendment 15 was adopted.

[4:57:51 PM](#)

CHAIR CARRICK announced that HB 43, Version I, as amended, was held over.

[4:58:37 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.