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STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

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POUCH Y - STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
907-465-3800

May, 1986

Copies of minutes listed below were originally included in this file. The minutes are available on the STAIRS date base CM 14. In order to save space copies of minutes have not been left in the files.

Jeanie Henry

House Judiciary

4-24-85

1:30 pm

COMMITTEE REPORT

HOUSE

JUDICIARY

(7)

FURTHER: FINANCE

3/6/85

Date: MARCH 13, 1985

Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on STATE AFFAIRS has had HB 272

"An Act relating to absentee voting."

under consideration and reports it back as follows:

- do pass do not pass
- do pass with attached amendments(s)
- replace with CS for _____ same title
 new title
- and recommends _____
- AND attaches a "Letter of Intent" New Fiscal Note
- reports it back without recommendation Zero Fiscal Note Attached
- referred to the _____ Committee

MEMBERS SIGNING
DO PASS

[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]

MEMBERS HAVING
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

[Signature]

[Signature]
CHAIRMAN

Alaska State Legislature



House of Representatives

REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN L. SUND

Box 6440
KETCHIKAN, ALASKA 99901
(907) 225-8552

WHALE IN JUNEAU
POUCH V
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
(907) 465-4919

CHAIR, HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LOANS
VICE-CHAIR, JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MEMBER, SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON OIL AND GAS
MEMBER, RESOURCES COMMITTEE

3/12/85

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Representative John Sund
TO: State Affairs Committee

RE: HB 272 Absentee Voting

Absentee Voting has long been a problem in my district, and I've found this to be the result of inconsistency in scheduling. Last year in Ketchikan absentee voters were allowed only a few days to vote in both the primary and general elections. These days were not well advertised, and the scheduled hours and voting locations varied between elections.

This bill will bring some stability to the process and allow voters who work long and unpredictable schedules, i.e., construction, fishing, logging; the convenience of a two week period of eight hour days to cast their vote.

It wouldn't be cost efficient to extend the voting hours in all of Alaska's small communities, so this bill makes provisions only for those cities with 1,000 residents.

The majority of absentee voting in this state is being efficiently coordinated by city clerks, and complaints are usually directed toward those cities that handle it differently. It is for these exceptions that this legislation is directed.

FISCAL NOTE

Revision Date: _____

REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 272

Title: An act relating to
absentee voting

Sponsor: Sund

Requestor: Sund

Date of Request: 3-11-85

FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected: Office of the Governor

Program Category Affected: _____

Division of Elections

BRU, Program or Subprogram(s) Affected: _____

Elections

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FI 50	FI 55	FI 61	FI 66	FI 69	FI 90
100 PERSONAL SERVICES						
200 TRAVEL		1.5	0	1.8	0	2.2
300 CONTRACTUAL		6.6	165.6	8.0	200.4	9.7
400 SUPPLIES						
500 EQUIPMENT						
600 LAND & BUILDINGS						
700 GRANTS, IN AID						
800 MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0	8.1	165.6	9.8	200.4	11.9

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0	8.1	165.6	9.8	200.4	11.9
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: Attach a separate page if necessary

SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

Prepared By: Linda Clement Phone: 465-4611
Division: Division of Elections Date: 3/12/85

Approved by Commissioner: Andrea Hunt Date: 3/12/85
Agency: Division of Elections

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note):
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)

7/1/84

STATE OF ALASKA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS
POUCH AF
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-9974

PHONE: (907) 586-6181

Statewide Statistical Average Relating to Absentee In Person Voting

What follows is a description of the formula used to determine an overall general average of In Person Voting that can be expected in Alaska for a community of 1000 residents. This formula does not represent a statistically perfect analysis but based on some limited data which is available can be used to provide a general overview.

Population	1000	
Eligible to Register	<u>x .675</u>	
Potential Voters	675	
% Actually Registered	<u>x .88</u>	
Registered Voters	594	
% Actually Voting	<u>x .70</u>	
**Ballots Cast	415.8	
% Ballots Cast by Absentee	<u>x .12</u>	
++ Absentee Ballots Cast	49.89	

** Of the total ballots cast, 12% are cast by absentee, with 6.3% being cast by mail, and 5.7% being cast in person.

++	Absentee Ballots Cast	49.89	
	% Cast in person	<u>x .057</u>	
	TOTAL BALLOTS CAST IN PERSON	23.69	

Fiscal Note Analysis
HB 272
Division of Elections
March 12, 1985

At present, staffing and space acquisition for absentee voting stations prior to major elections is handled on what is primarily a volunteer basis. Mandating by statute the number of days and hours during which an absentee voting station will operate, requires a formalization of the recruitment and space acquisition process by which the state will implement this program. This fiscal note assumes the maximum costs if the conversion to a mandated standard precludes our options for relying on current volunteer outlets.

There are approximately 35 communities which would be impacted by this legislation during odd numbered fiscal years during which statewide primary and general elections would occur. Costs identified in these years include:

Space Rental	35 sites at \$30/day x 14 days x 2 elections
Station Workers	70 (2/site) at \$8/hour x 8 hours x 14 days x 2 elections
Misc. Admin.	35 sites @ \$50 (Misc. telephone/postage etc.) x 2 elections

In addition, every year an average of 3 special elections can be expected, each of which would involve 1 site. Travel and training costs which would already be covered in current operating budgets for general elections years, are specified in this fiscal note for those years in which no general elections is scheduled.

An inflationary factor of 10% is included each year.

ABSENTEE VOTING BY COMMUNITY

	<u>Total Ballots</u>	<u># of Absentee</u>	<u>By Mail</u>	<u>In Person</u>
Ketchikan	3,090	370	194	176
Kodiak	2,032	244	128	116
Sitka	1,802	216	108	108
Bethel	1,302	156	82	74
Delta Junction	375	45	24	21
Homer	1,280	154	81	73
Kotzebue	736	88	46	42
Palmer	378	45	24	21
Soldotna	1,271	152	80	72
Cordova	670	80	42	38
Juneau	13,265	1,997	836	1,161
Valdez	1,289	155	81	74
Dillingham	636	76	40	36
Kenai	1,937	232	122	110

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COMMENTS ON HOUSE BILL 272

Prepared by
THE DIVISION OF ELECTIONS
April 19, 1985

The Division of Elections has reviewed House Bill 272, and after careful consideration of its content, we must raise some points in opposition for the committee's consideration. We share the concerns of its sponsors that the state must make a concerted effort to enhance every voter's opportunity to vote. However, we are also concerned that the provisions of this amendment create an administrative and fiscal burden that far outweighs any additional benefit that might be derived. We also feel that the amendment proposed may be based on some misconceptions about the current provisions for absentee in person voting which are already being administered by the division on a statewide basis.

Our first area of concern requires us to clarify the distinction between an absentee voting station, and an absentee official. The absentee official makes available only the ballots for the specific district in which he or she is located. Ballots for all 27 districts are available, however, at an absentee voting station.

This bill seeks to amend AS 15.20.048(a) of the Election Code. This section relates specifically to the absentee voting stations at the supervisor's office in each of our 4 regions. The key provision of this section is that ballots for all 27 districts will be available at these stations. The language proposed to be added to (a) of this section, while unclear on this point, implies that this service would be extended to all communities with at least 1000 residents. We estimate that at least 35 communities would be involved. One concern is that election supervisors would not be able to maintain adequate supervision over this many stations spread out over such a large area, and for this duration of time, to ensure that the proper controls and ballot accountability for all 27 districts could be maximized.

If, on the other hand, it was the sponsor's intent to ensure that absentee officials were available in these 35 communities for single district voting, provision for those officials is already made under AS 20.045. This section allows the director or the election supervisor to designate absentee officials in any community in which there is no regional office, and therefore no absentee voting station. The same 15 days is authorized for these officials to serve absentee voters prior to election day. The major differences between the existing provisions and those suggested by this bill, are that the proposed amendment mandates the hours and days these absentee officials will be required to serve and, where they will be required.

The division feels that the flexibility of the existing statutes is preferable over the rigidity imposed by the amendment, in that it allows the division to accomplish the desired result while still responding to the actual circumstances prevailing within a specific community at the given time.

It should be pointed out that the division has a firm commitment to providing the absentee voter adequate opportunity to vote in person prior to election day. Absentee officials are appointed in well beyond the 35 communities which would be mandated by this bill. In person absentee voting is made available to voters at over 60 locations statewide, and it is anticipated that more officials will be designated for 1986.

It is our concern that the rigidity of the proposed amendment will impair our ability to solicit the cooperative volunteer officials who are currently serving the voters in these locations so well. We are also concerned that this interruption of our current volunteer program will create a great fiscal burden to the state not currently absorbed.

At the present time we are able to tap the experienced and capable support of city and borough clerks in most communities across the state. Their cooperation is invaluable to our effort because of their continuity, and hands-on election experience. They also maintain regular hours at locations familiar to the residents of the community. It has been our experience that their willingness to continue to serve the Division of Elections is hinged on the fact that they are able to perform this service within the structure of their normal daily routine, with normal staffing and during regular hours. The mandates of this bill would require extensive overtime hours and changes in their normal routine which they may not be so eager to embrace.

At present, we are also able to negotiate times and locations in smaller communities where there is no city clerk. The private individuals who serve, and the businesses and organizations who donate their locations, may arrange flexible hours, and use of space that may only be available during certain times. Again, some officials work out of their homes and mandating 8 hours a day for 7 days a week for 2 weeks may put a greater burden on these individuals than they would wish to take on.

Removal of the flexibility which is allowed by the current statute jeopardizes the level of cooperation on which we can now rely. Our ability to negotiate with these volunteers would be stripped away. As a result of this statute our procedure for setting up absentee in person voting locations would fall out of the realm of volunteerism and good will, and we would have to be prepared to handle the mandated requirements just as we do for polling places on election day. The bottom line is that what we are virtually getting for free, we would

have to be prepared to pay for. The fiscal note enclosed reflects the costs to the state, and is based on our rates and on our experience with similar kinds of costs for workers and locations on election day. The costs in major election years, just based on primary and general elections alone, is estimated at \$165,000.00.


Of major consideration is whether or not this potential cost to the state is warranted based on the realities pertinent to the actual number of voters to be served. These same numbers, with only rare exceptions, are being adequately served under the current statute. We believe that the facts will bear out our conclusion that any potential benefit will not be great enough to warrant the fiscal burden upon the state.

Attached for the committee's review is data which illustrates the number of voters that, based on the 1984 general election, are actually served at the in person voting locations. We have provided a formula showing the average number of persons voting absentee in person based on general percentages relevant to the 1984 election, and used that formula to project the number of people impacted in specific communities across the state. To check the relativity of our formula we verified the projected figures against the actual in person ballots cast in a sampling of the same communities and determined that with minimal variances, our formula is indeed representative.

What these figures reflect, is that out of 1000 population, only 24 people would use an absentee in person voting location. Further, in the vast majority of the 35 communities which would be covered under this bill, the population to be served is fewer than 100 people.

We must ask ourselves if, given these facts, the potential benefit to these relatively few voters offsets the exorbitant expenditure which would result from passage of this bill. Or, are the existing statutes, and the continuing progress being made by the division to continue to expand existing services sufficient to serve the need?

We would agree that we must continue to focus special attention on larger and growing communities where demand is ever increasing. And, we must continue to address specific problems as they arise. However, we feel that this bill attempts to present "global" solutions to what in reality are occasional local problems. For the reasons we have discussed here, we raise objections to this bill and hope the information we have provided will prove helpful to the committee in its deliberations.



Sandra J. Stout, Director
Division of Elections

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POUCH AF
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-9974

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PHONE: (907) 586-6181

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Unalaska	330	39	21	18
Seward	1,285	154	81	73