

**SB**

**93**

<TARGET><BILL>SB 93</BILL><SUBJECT>SB  
93</SUBJECT><COMM>SSTA29</COMM></TARGET>

# 29<sup>th</sup> Alaska State Legislature

Session:  
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## Senator Lesil McGuire

### Senate Bill 93 Sponsor Statement

*"An Act relating to absentee voting, voting, and voter registration; establishing a means of registering to vote online; relating to early voting locations at which persons may vote absentee ballots; and providing for an effective date."*

The right to vote embodies the spirit of American democracy. Casting a vote is the most discretely effective way to have one's voice heard in the political process. When we exercise our right to vote we impact our community far beyond an election: we are able to elect individuals who will make decisions on our behalf about how our government will be run, set the policies that will guide our state, and how resources, both national and local, are distributed.

Unfortunately, a surprising number of Americans don't exercise their right to vote. On average, only about half of eligible US voters cast ballots. Although, Alaska is one of a handful of states which exceeded 50 percent voter turnout in 2014, nearly half of registered Alaskan voters are effectively not being heard.

This bill includes a series of changes designed to increase voter participation and access to voting across the state by improving and clarifying the voting process. These changes include:

- Allowing for online voter registration through MyAlaska
- Providing same day voter registration to allow all eligible Alaskans the opportunity to vote;
- Enhancing online voter registration with electronic signatures to make the registration process quicker and easier;
- Ensuring the same early voting locations are available during every election;
- Creating an option for permanent absentee voting for individuals that plan to vote by mail every year; and
- Clarifying and unifying terminology for early voting to remove confusion between early voting and absentee in-person voting.

By adopting the changes in this bill, we can take a step forward to increase the voice of all Alaskans.

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### Senate Bill 93 Sectional Analysis

#### **Sections 1-9**

Pages 1-5 Lines 5-12

Allows for online voter registration through the state's Internet Website and acceptance of an electronic signature.

#### **Section 10**

Page 5 Lines 13-22

A qualified voter who registers within 30 days or on the day of an election shall vote a questioned ballot.

#### **Section 11**

Page 5 Lines 23-29

Amends AS 15.07.070(f) regarding incomplete or inaccurate registration forms; adding "online."

#### **Section 12**

Pages 5-6 Lines 30-6

Amends AS 15.07.130 (e) to replace "absentee" with "early" in regards to polling places.

#### **Section 13**

Pages 6-7 Lines 7-3

Amends AS 15.20.045 Early voting stations will be operated for persons who vote absentee ballots. Early voting stations will exist unless the location is no longer available for use or the director determines that the location is no longer appropriate for use as an early voting station and makes the determination available to the public in writing.

#### **Section 14-16**

Pages 7-8 Lines 3-2

Replaces "absentee" with "early" in regard to voting stations.

#### **Section 17**

Page 8 Lines 3-11

Amends AS 15.20.081 by adding a new subsection that allows voters who request an absentee ballot by mail to continue to receive an absentee ballot for future regularly scheduled state elections. Voters do not need to reapply for the mailed ballot unless the voter has not voted an

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absentee ballot for a period of four years or the previous ballot was returned to the division as undeliverable.

### **Section 18**

Page 8 Lines 12-13

Amends AS 15.80.010 by adding a new paragraph giving "Electronic Signature" the meaning given in AS 09.80.190.

### **Section 19**

Page 8 Lines 14-19

Amends AS 29.20.380 replaces "absentee" with "voting" allows for municipal clerks to act as an absentee voting official to distribute absentee ballots to qualified voters in a municipality in which the division of elections will not be operating an early voting station.

### **Section 20**

Page 8 Lines 20-25

The Director of Elections may adopt or amend regulations as necessary to implement the changes made by this Act.

### **Section 21**

Page 8 Line 26

Effective Date of January 1, 2016