
HOUSE BILL 2173

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Representatives Hudgins and Koster

1 AN ACT Relating to ballot drop box accessibility; amending RCW
2 29A.40.160; and adding a new section to chapter 29A.40 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.40.160 and 2011 c 10 s 43 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (1) Each county auditor shall open a voting center each primary,
7 special election, and general election. The voting center shall be
8 open during business hours during the voting period, which begins
9 eighteen days before, and ends at 8:00 p.m. on the day of, the
10 primary, special election, or general election.

11 (2) The voting center must provide voter registration materials,
12 ballots, provisional ballots, disability access voting units, sample
13 ballots, instructions on how to properly vote the ballot, a ballot
14 drop box, and voters' pamphlets, if a voters' pamphlet has been
15 published.

16 (3) The voting center must be accessible to persons with
17 disabilities. Each state agency and entity of local government shall
18 permit the use of any of its accessible facilities as voting centers
19 when requested by a county auditor.

20 (4) The voting center must provide at least one voting unit
21 certified by the secretary of state that provides access to

1 individuals who are blind or visually impaired, enabling them to vote
2 with privacy and independence.

3 (5) No person may interfere with a voter attempting to vote in a
4 voting center. Interfering with a voter attempting to vote is a
5 violation of RCW 29A.84.510.

6 (6) Before opening the voting center, the voting equipment shall
7 be inspected to determine if it has been properly prepared for
8 voting. If the voting equipment is capable of direct tabulation of
9 each voter's choices, the county auditor shall verify that no votes
10 have been registered for any issue or office, and that the device has
11 been sealed with a unique numbered seal at the time of final
12 preparation and logic and accuracy testing. A log must be made of all
13 device numbers and seal numbers.

14 (7) The county auditor shall require any person desiring to vote
15 at a voting center to either sign a ballot declaration or provide
16 identification.

17 (a) The signature on the declaration must be compared to the
18 signature on the voter registration record before the ballot may be
19 counted. If the voter registered using a mark, or can no longer sign
20 his or her name, the election officers shall require the voter to be
21 identified by another registered voter.

22 (b) The identification must be valid photo identification, such
23 as a driver's license, state identification card, student
24 identification card, tribal identification card, or employer
25 identification card. Any individual who desires to vote in person but
26 cannot provide identification shall be issued a provisional ballot,
27 which shall be accepted if the signature on the declaration matches
28 the signature on the voter's registration record.

29 (8) Provisional ballots must be accompanied by a declaration and
30 security envelope, as required by RCW 29A.40.091, and space for the
31 voter's name, date of birth, current and former registered address,
32 reason for the provisional ballot, and disposition of the provisional
33 ballot. The voter shall vote and return the provisional ballot at the
34 voting center. The voter must be provided information on how to
35 ascertain whether the provisional ballot was counted and, if
36 applicable, the reason why the vote was not counted.

37 (9) Any voter may take printed or written material into the
38 voting device to assist in casting his or her vote. The voter shall
39 not use this material to electioneer and shall remove it when he or
40 she leaves the voting center.

1 (10) If any voter states that he or she is unable to cast his or
2 her votes due to a disability, the voter may designate a person of
3 his or her choice, or two election officers, to enter the voting
4 booth and record the votes as he or she directs.

5 (11) No voter is entitled to vote more than once at a primary,
6 special election, or general election. If a voter incorrectly marks a
7 ballot, he or she may be issued a replacement ballot.

8 (12) A voter who has already returned a ballot but requests to
9 vote at a voting center shall be issued a provisional ballot. The
10 canvassing board shall not count the provisional ballot if it finds
11 that the voter has also voted a regular ballot in that primary,
12 special election, or general election.

13 (13) The county auditor must prevent overflow of each ballot drop
14 box to allow a voter to deposit his or her ballot securely. Ballots
15 must be removed from a ballot drop box by at least two people, with a
16 record kept of the date and time ballots were removed, and the names
17 of people removing them. Ballots from drop boxes must be returned to
18 the counting center in secured transport containers. A copy of the
19 record must be placed in the container, and one copy must be
20 transported with the ballots to the counting center, where the seal
21 number must be verified by the county auditor or a designated
22 representative. All ballot drop boxes must be secured at 8:00 p.m. on
23 the day of the primary, special election, or general election.

24 (14) Any voter who is inside or in line at the voting center at
25 8:00 p.m. on the day of the primary, special election, or general
26 election must be allowed to vote.

27 (15) For each primary, special election, and general election,
28 the county auditor may provide election services at locations in
29 addition to the voting center. The county auditor has discretion to
30 establish which services will be provided at the additional
31 locations, and which days and hours the locations will be open.

32 (16) By 2027, the county auditor must establish a minimum of one
33 ballot drop box per thirty thousand registered voters in the county
34 with preference given to establishing a minimum of one ballot drop
35 box in each city, town, and census-designated place with a post
36 office in the county.

37 (17) The county auditor is authorized to place a ballot drop box
38 at any public school, public library, or fire station.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 29A.40
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) The state is responsible for the cost of obtaining, siting,
4 maintaining, and operating ballot drop boxes for all elections. The
5 county auditor must certify the cost and file expense claims to the
6 office of the secretary of state.

7 (2) Each county auditor must submit a request with the office of
8 the secretary of state by December 1st for any new ballot drop boxes
9 the county is requesting for the following year. The secretary of
10 state may agree to reimburse the county for the costs of providing
11 any new ballot drop boxes or contract with a third party to fulfill
12 all or some of the counties' requests.

13 (3) The secretary of state must include in his or her budget
14 requests sufficient funds to carry out this section. Payments for
15 ballot drop box costs must be from appropriations specifically
16 provided by law for that purpose.

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