

House Government Operations Committee

2/4/2025

Bill: 2nd Substitute HB 332 – Voter Registration Data Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Karianne Lisonbee

Floor Sponsor: TBD

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill addresses voter registration data.

Discussion: The sponsor addressed the 2nd substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. This Bill is focused on safeguarding voters' private information. The sponsor expressed her belief that there is voter fraud both in Utah and nationwide. An audit was recently completed that provided several recommendations, which the sponsor intends to address through the provisions in this Bill. The Bill ensures regular monitoring of Utah's voter rolls, enabling the identification, flagging, and resolution of records that may indicate voter fraud. Additionally, it includes provisions aimed at enhancing personal data protections and removes Utah from the Electronic Registration Information Center ("ERIC").

Representative Maloy inquired whether there is an issue with the enforcement of laws that remove the eligibility of deceased individuals from voter rolls and how this could be done without compromising voter data. The sponsor clarified that the monitoring process within the Bill involves the Lieutenant Governor's Office and county clerks. The Lieutenant Governor's Office will be the decider if a third party is chosen to "clean up" the state's voter rolls. Representative Cutler questioned the decision to remove Utah from ERIC, noting that the system has provided valuable data and proved to be effective. The sponsor responded that her original intent was to withdraw Utah from ERIC. As the audit report was released, additional provisions were incorporated into the Bill to improve voter roll maintenance. Representative Cutler expressed concerns about sharing voter information with an external contractor instead of using state resources. The sponsor stated that the Bill includes safeguards to ensure the responsible handling of data if a third party is involved. The sponsor believes that states that have exited ERIC have been more successful in cleaning up voter rolls. Members of the public voiced both support and opposition to the Bill.

Yeas: 10

Nays: 3

N/V: 0

Outcome: 2nd Substitute HB 332 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: HB 300 – Amendments to Election Law

Sponsor: Representative Jefferson S. Burton

Floor Sponsor: TBD

UASD Position: Tracking with Concern

This Bill amends provisions relating to voting at an election.

Discussion: The sponsor said that recent polls conducted in Utah gauged public opinion on election procedures, revealing that many Utahns believe voter identification should be required at the polls. He expressed concerns Utah residents have regarding mail-in ballots, particularly with the delay in receiving election results. HB 300 maintains the option for mail-in ballots but introduces a process requiring a voter to provide identification to their respective county clerk every two years to be able to vote by mail. The sponsor understands that this change will cause a lot more people to vote in person and stated that volunteers will be essential to assist with the increased number of needed polling locations and the counting process. The sponsor believes that adequate preparation and adjustments would be necessary to effectively implement these changes. He stated that the intent of the Bill is to require individuals to have to provide identification to vote.

Representative Hayes raised concerns about the fiscal impact of the Bill, expressing hesitation about placing additional burdens on counties. In response, the sponsor indicated that efforts are underway to explore ways to minimize the associated costs for counties. Representative Hayes also expressed concern for citizens who are elderly or disabled that may struggle voting in-person or applying for mail-in ballots because that application must be made in person. The sponsor reassured the Committee that a substitute version of the Bill is being drafted to address this issue. Representative Romero inquired about the impact of the Bill on residents from the Navajo Nation and other remote communities that may be far from polling locations. The sponsor emphasized the importance of proper preparation to ensure that all Utahns, regardless of location, are given the opportunity to vote. Representative Romero expressed concern about the potential for voter turnout to decline due to the new restrictions on mail-in ballots and whether accommodations would be made for individuals unable to personally deliver their ballots to drop boxes. The Bill would require mail-in ballots to be hand delivered in their envelopes to a drop box that is manned by at least two election workers who will verify the voter's eligibility and physically drop the envelope into the drop box for the voter. Representative Loubet revisited the fiscal note, reiterating concerns about the financial implications for counties. The fiscal note is six million dollars each election year. The sponsor clarified that the state would assist counties by providing necessary resources, ensuring they would not bear the full burden. Another representative inquired about staffing for drop boxes, asking if counties would have sufficient personnel to monitor these locations. The sponsor assured that there would not be a shortage of volunteers willing to assist at drop-boxes because Utah is a volunteer state. Representative Fiefla asked about the immediate effects of the Bill, to which the sponsor responded that the goal is to increase public confidence in the election process, with the hope that election results could be provided on the night of the election. Representative Fiefla also asked about the strategies in place to inform the public about the changes proposed by the Bill. The sponsor stated that billboards and outreach efforts assigned to counties and municipalities would help ensure residents are informed of the new voting processes.

Public opinion on the Bill was divided, with many individuals expressing opposition and support. The Davis County Clerk said that the county clerks have not taken a position on this Bill, but the majority of the clerks do have some concerns with this Bill because of the potential impact it has on voters, the logistics of implementing the requirements in the Bill, and the

increased cost. The clerks are committed to continue to work with the sponsor as this Bill moves through the legislative process. The Disability Law Center expressed concern with the Bill. The Utah League of Cities and Towns has not taken a position on the Bill but did say that the state has seen a large increase in voter turnout for municipal elections with the vote by mail process. The League is concerned that this legislation could decrease voter turnout. There is also concern with the associated costs of educating the public about these changes. A substitute version of the Bill is expected to be presented when it is brought to the floor of the House.

Yeas: 9
Nays: 4
N/V: 0

Outcome: HB 300 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: SB 25 – Postretirement Reemployment for Emergency Services Workers

Sponsor: Senator Wayne A. Harper
Floor Sponsor: Representative Cheryl K. Acton

UASD Position: Support

This Bill modifies provisions of the Utah State Retirement and Insurance Benefits Act relating to postretirement reemployment.

Discussion: SB 25 allows individuals who retired under the Utah Retirement System (“URS”) to make up to \$15,000 as an affiliated emergency services worker without adversely affecting their retirement benefits. There was no discussion by the Committee members or comments from the public.

Yeas: 10
Nays: 0
N/V: 3

Outcome: SB 25 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.
