

SECRETARY
of STATE

Sam Reed



Legislative Building
PO Box 40220
Olympia, WA 98504-0220
Tel 360.902.4151
Fax 360.586.5629
www.secstate.wa.gov

September 10, 2009

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
United States House of Representatives
Chair, Subcommittee on Elections, Committee on House Administration

Dear Congresswoman Lofgren,

I strongly support the online voter registration proposed in **H.R. 1719**. Washington and Arizona are the only states in the nation with online voter registration. Our online programs have been very popular in Washington, with approximately 160,000 registrations and 50,000 registration updates in 2008. In addition, we have used email for many years to transmit ballots and other election materials.

In support of **H.R. 1719**, I do have a few recommendations to make it even better legislation.

- **Driver's License or State ID Card.** The online voter registration system *must* be tied to the state driver's licensing agency (DMV or DOL). Without this, there is no signature for the voter registration file. It goes without saying that a sound voter registration system requires a signature from each voter. The online registration systems in Washington and Arizona both link to their state licensing agencies. Because these applicants have previously come into a driver's licensing office in person, online applications are less subject to fraud than paper applications. I recommend inserting the DMV/DOL requirement in place of the reference to "technological security measures" because fraud is not prevented with a piece of technology, but by requiring each user to prove his or her identity.
- **Timing of Registration.** The bill forces every state to adopt a voter registration deadline of 15 days or earlier. This is too close to Election Day and jeopardizes the integrity of the election. For millions of Americans who vote absentee, this is too late. Most states have a 25-30 day deadline. Fifteen days is insufficient time to identify the thousands of duplicate registrations that result each time a person who is already registered submits a new registration application.
- **Prohibiting Cancellation of Invalid Registrations.** For over 15 years, NVRA has stated that once a voter moves and fails to update his or her information through two federal General Elections (a Presidential election cycle), the invalid registration may be cancelled. This bill prohibits states from cancelling registrations that are clearly invalid, even though the person may have moved 15 years ago or died 5 years ago. There is no doubt that this provision will result in inaccurate voter rolls. The provision refers to registrants "on the official list of eligible voters ... to whom a unique identifier has *not* been assigned under the computerized Statewide voter registration list." This sentence makes no sense since the "official list of eligible voters" may only include voters "to whom a unique identifier has been assigned."

Online voter registration is convenient, accessible, and efficient. I hope that these suggestions can improve your legislation. Please call on me if I can provide additional information, (360) 902-4151.

Sincerely,


SAM REED
Secretary of State

cc: Subcommittee on Elections, Committee on House Administration