Same Day Registration

Recommendations from the SDR Workgroup

March 19, 2018
Governor Inslee signs bills to improve state's democratic process

Intro to SDR
How do we count one ballot per voter?

Housekeeping

▶ Please add questions to the chat box. We would like to hold questions and answers for the end of the presentation.

▶ Intro of presenters
  ▶ Jacob Lodge
  ▶ Mike McLaughlin
  ▶ Amelia Odeen
  ▶ Janielle Tomlin

Introduction

- Same day group
  - The Secretary of State together with 12 counties met to prepare and make recommendations for implementing the new same day registration laws
    - Thank you to the following counties and the Secretary of State:
      - Benton
      - Clark
      - Cowlitz
      - Island
      - King
      - Kitsap
      - Pierce
      - Skamania
      - Snohomish
      - Spokane
      - Thurston
      - Walla Walla

How do we count one ballot per voter?

Training overview, what we are trying to accomplish

▶ Changes to law

▶ Recommendations:

    ▶ Forwarding ballots

    ▶ Consistency with information provided in ballot packets

    ▶ In person registrations

    ▶ Processing returned ballots

    ▶ Processing ballots for transferred voters

All Counties Surveyed

- In the beginning the group reached out to all counties for feed back on processes.

- 33 county responded.

- Questions include:
    - Ballot inserts
    - Ballot forwarding
    - Ballot processing

- We will be commenting on responses when we go over recommendations founded by this committee.

Changing Voter Registration Deadlines

- Removes the 29 day deadline

- Changes the 8 day deadline

  - Deadline to update your voter registration or register to vote

  - County must receive the document/notification

  - Receive does not mean postmarked

- Election Day deadline

  - Voters can register to vote in person through 8pm Election Day

  - Voters must appear in their county of residence

  - Voters allowed to do updates (currently by all sources)

Legislative cleanup - impacts

- Right now, Auditors are working together for a clean-up bill to address:
  - Updates to be in person E-7 through election day at the county auditor's office

Impacts

- Have to receive registrations in house by 8 day

- More replacement and reissued ballots sent to voters

- More registration activity occurring closer to the election

- Larger numbers of voters at voting centers

- Preparation: Start to think about handling increased volumes of work. Will need to conduct registration activity at the same time as running vote centers and processing incoming ballots.

VoteWA

- Advantages - every user will be on one system which allows:
  - Quicker access to data in voter registration system
  - Able to see status of ballots for voters
  - Ability to transfer voters in system, without using a secondary system (VRDB)
- Challenges - Balancing security and accountability with voter access
  - Ensure voters get to participate in the jurisdiction where they reside and are eligible to vote
  - Ensure only one ballot will be counted for a voter

Recommendations

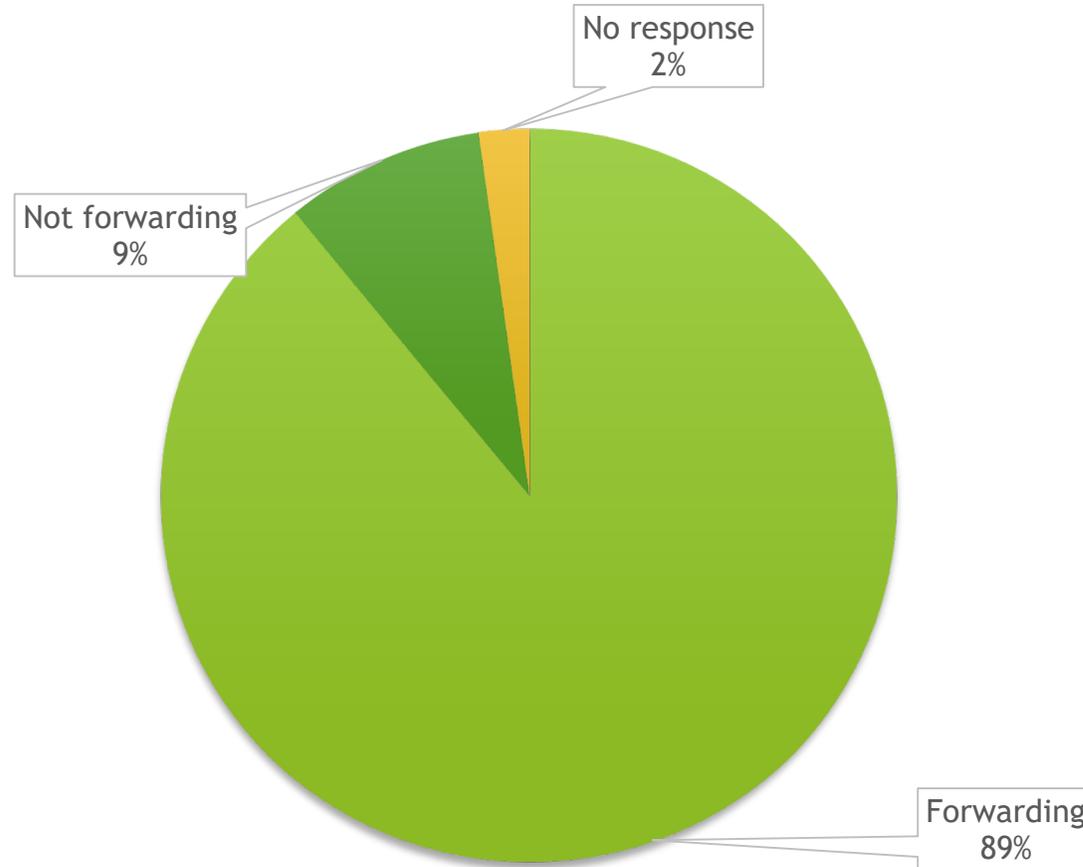rec·om·men·da·tion
/ˌrekəmənˈdāSH(ə)n/

A suggestion or proposal as to the best course of action.

'the committee put forward recommendations for change'

Survey Question:
Does your county forward ballots?

Forwarded ballots as percent of registered voters

No response
2%

Not forwarding
9%

Forwarding
89%

#1: Forwarding ballot packets

▶ Most of us are currently forwarding ballot packets. If your county is not doing this currently, we recommend reconsidering forwarding ballots.

▶ Why?

  ▶ Voters get their ballot packet if they moved

  ▶ Allows voter to get information and contact county to update earlier, may reduce in person updates close to election

  ▶ Can receive address update information electronically from USPS after certification of the election.

#2: Improved consistency with ballot packets

► Each county should include inserts to inform voters about reissued and replacement ballot packets.

► New terminology:

   ► **Reissued** – The voter registration record has been updated or changed that impacts the ballot.

   ► **Replacement** – The voter registration record is not updated or changed in any way that impacts the ballot. Typically requested by the voter.

Draft inserts: Reissued

⚠ Your ballot has changed!

Why am I getting a new ballot?

You are receiving this updated ballot because your residential address changed after ballots were mailed. The enclosed ballot has the correct races and precinct information for your new address.

What do I need to do?

Please vote and return this updated ballot.

What if I already returned my other ballot?

Please vote and return this updated ballot even if you have already returned the previous ballot. Only one ballot will be counted.

King County vote!

206-296-VOTE (8683) | elections@kingcounty.gov | kingcounty.gov/elections

Draft inserts: Replacement

This is your replacement ballot packet.

Why am I getting a new ballot?

You are receiving this updated ballot because your name changed, your language preference changed, you have a new mailing address or you requested a replacement ballot.
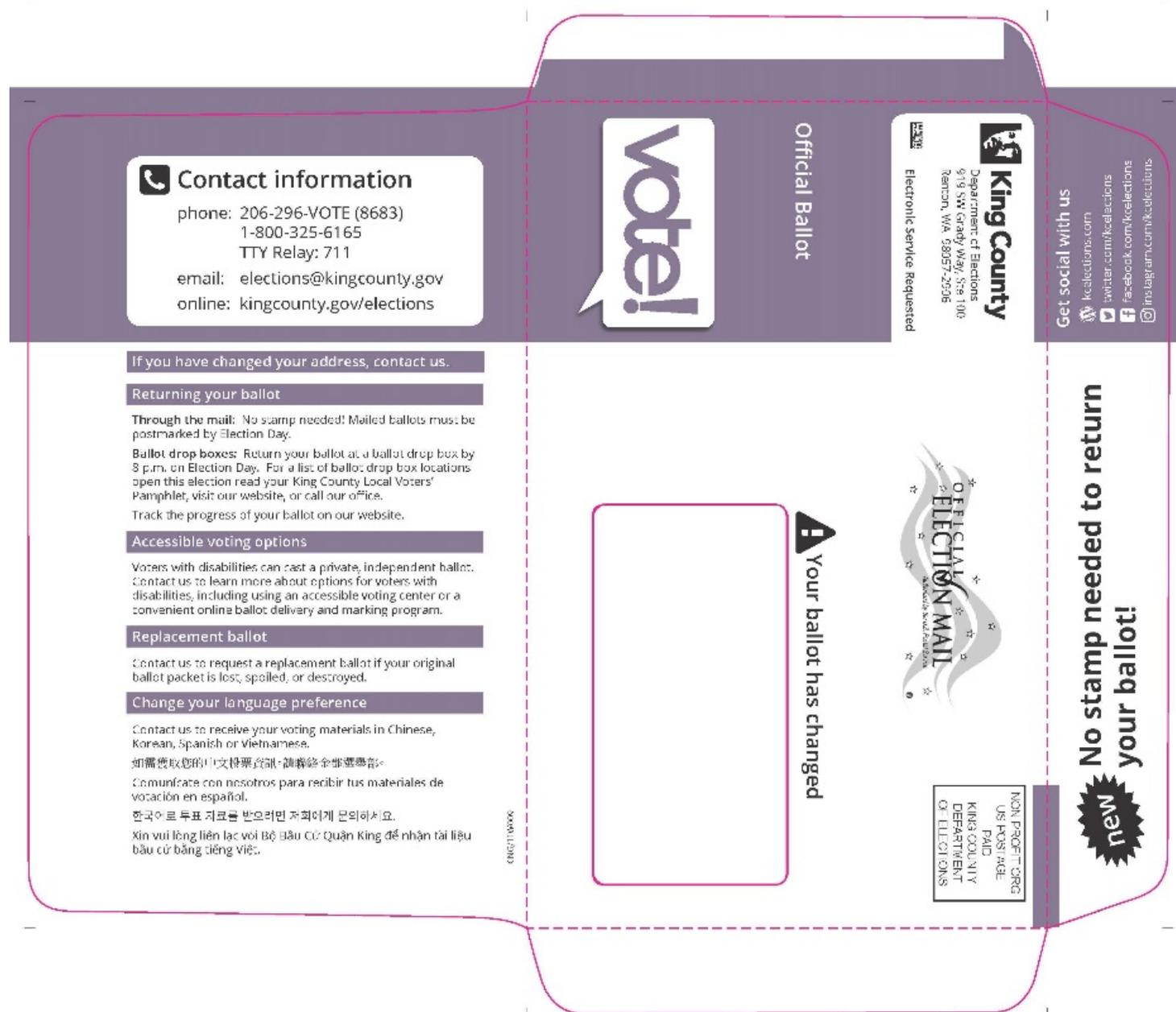
What if I already returned my other ballot?

You can recycle this ballot if you have already returned the previous ballot.

King County vote!

206-296-VOTE (8683) | elections@kingcounty.gov | kingcounty.gov/elections

Draft Envelope for reissued ballots

#3: Handling in person registrations

- When voters appear in office to register to vote closer to election day, they should be registered and issued a ballot

    - Ensures ballot security and system transparency

    - Allow staff to mitigate any issues with registrations

    - Voter able to vote their actual ballot

    - Eliminates transit time issues when mailing
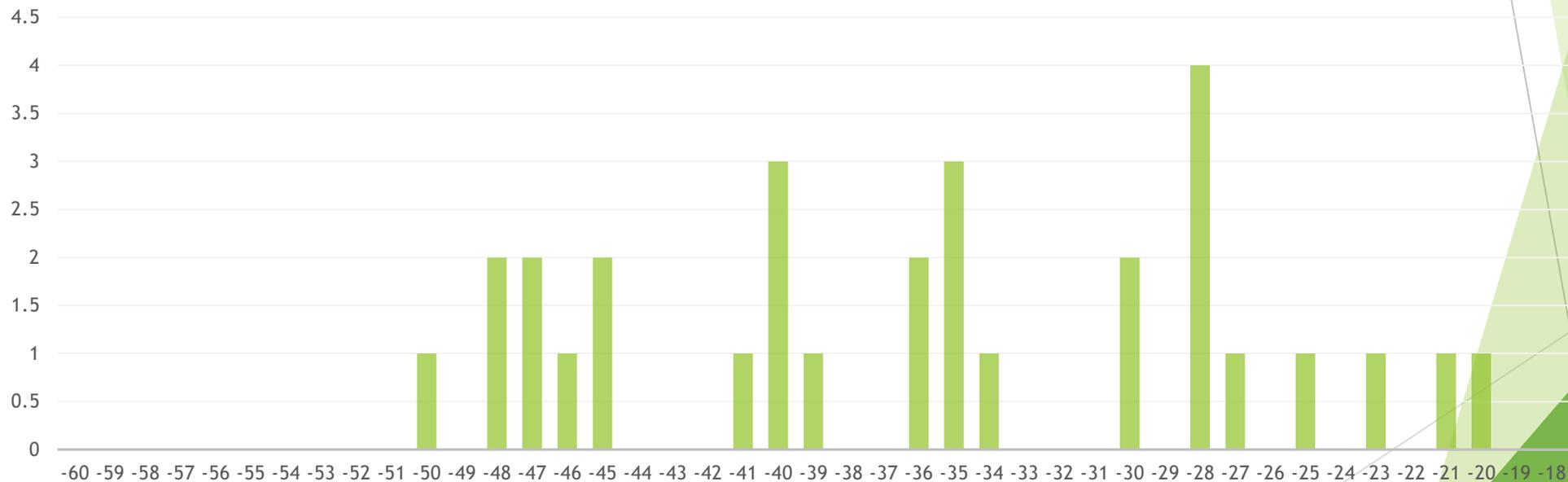
    - Counties will need full access to VoteWA

#3: Contingency plans with in person registrations

- Counties will develop a conditional registration process for voters to register and vote if unable to access the system (disaster recovery plans, emergencies, unable to have vote center connected to system)

  - Similar to provisional ballot process

  - County holds and processes when able

  - If able to register and process, then voter is treated as normal registration

Survey Question: Do you use vendors for ballot packets and when do you send your extract?

▶ 27 counties use vendors to produce ballot packets

When counties create mailing file for regular ballots

ELECTION MINUS ___ DAYS

#4: Processing returned ballots

- Need to build consistency across the state on when and how we process incoming voted ballots

  - Need to have minimum information on received ballots to ensure ballot security and data transparency

  - System will alert staff when a voter is attempting to transfer their registration after a ballot has been received by any county

  - Allows counties to research and transfer if appropriate. Will not transfer registration if voters ballot has been received, signature verified and accepted

#4: Processing returned ballots

- Recommendation:

  - Minimum step for processing is marking ballot **received** on the voters record

  - From E-45 to E-18, each county will process their incoming ballots at least 1x per week

  - From E-15 to E+3: each county will process their incoming ballots each day

  - Large volumes after E+3 should be processed each day

#4: Handling suspended ballots, introducing a new concept

Voters will be making changes through election day.

- ▶ Increases numbers of multiple ballots being issued to voters.

Our goal is to have voters vote the ballot they are currently eligible while ensuring only one ballot is counted.

- ▶ Changes from accepting 1st ballot received
- ▶ Holding suspended ballots to allow voter an opportunity to vote current ballot

#4: Handling suspended ballots, introducing a new concept

Introducing two new definitions:

1: Suspended ballot:

▶ Previous ballots issued to the voter due to request or change to voter registration

▶ If voter returns their suspended ballot, we will hold these until after election day to allow voter a chance to vote on ballot they are eligible to on

2: Current ballot is either:

▶ Ballot that is the newest issued and can be processed and counted when received

▶ Suspended ballot, after researching, will be un-suspended for processing and counting.

  ▶ Will only count items the voter is currently eligible to vote on

#4: Recommendations on processing suspended ballots

- Hold suspended ballots until at least 7 days after election
  - Ensure that voter did not send current ballot in
  - Accept Current ballot
  - Invalidate suspended ballot (This is not a reject it is **invalid**)
    - A voter can only have a ballot accepted, challenged/rejected, or not returned.
  - Duplicate suspended ballot to current precinct

#5: Processing ballots for transferred voters

- If a voter returns a ballot to you and they have been transferred to another county:
    - VoteWA will alert you that the voter has moved
    - Forward any and all ballots to the current county
    - Current county will suspend and hold as we talked about earlier

Start to get ready

- Have you thought about how you will handle the increased volume
  - Voter registration activities moving closer to election day
  - Will see increased volume of registration activity around the 8 day cutoff
  - How will you handle the incoming registrations and updates at the same time you are running vote centers, drop box pick ups, processing incoming ballots, etc
- How will you handle in person registrations
  - We should be handling these the same in all counties if possible.

Questions

Please send your questions to CTsupport@sos.wa.gov and we will connect you with a member of the work group.