

I am Randy Ruedrich from District 17 Downtown Anchorage. I represent myself

I wish to thank the Senate State Affairs Committee for this opportunity to testify on SB 64 as amended:

- 1) **Sec 1, 2, 4:** The requirement that the voter intends to return to **the same residence** is nonsensical. Voter Housing needs will change over time. No voter should expect to return to their parent's home after completing college. No military personnel return to their prior residence especially if they retired during that interim. This amendment is extremely limiting on Alaskan Voters that intend to return to Alaska. Legislation fails to provide for proper voter retention.

Suggest adopting related changes in SB 70 to clarify residency.

- 2) **Sec 25, 27 & 31: The Witness signature on the Absentee Ballots must be retained.**

Alaska State Law uses this witness signature as a second **person confirmation** that the voter who signed the ballot envelope is truly that person.

Election Day and Early Voting ballots do not require a witness signature since they are cast in the presence of DoE personnel. Absentee-In-Person (AIP) ballots are prepared in a DoE designated location with DoE staff, local government staff or tribal staff present.

The witness signature has provided assurance that the Absentee By Mail (ABM) ballot is proper for decades. An unwitnessed voter signature has lost its authentication. Our ABM Voting system has maintained Alaska Election Integrity for decades. Without this critical witness signature of the ABM Ballot, the agents of change will demand voter signature verification for a mail-in voting system. **Stop the destruction of Alaskan Election Integrity now, retain the ABM Ballot witness signatures.**

- 3) **Sec 29: Changing the Deadline for Absentee ballots to arrive to 10 days from 15 days after Election Day is in the right direction.** But the Federal Courts are working on this issue. Instead of series of state law changes to confuse voters, let's do this right in this bill: **Change to All Absentee Ballots must be returned by 8:00 pm Election Day.**

- 4) **Sec 32 33 34: Why does Alaska need a ballot cure process?**

In 2024 **82% of all ballots** were cast at the polls, at an Early Vote facility or an AIP facility. **No cure process can apply to any of these ballots.**

Only **1303 of 78,800 absentee ballots were rejected in 2024 General Election.** These 78,800 absentee ballots include 18,000 AIP ballots which include the Early Voting problems. DoE staff and their designees had the opportunity to cure approximately 70 AIP ballots when cast. Approximately **550 of these 1303** are not curable: Duplicate, not post marked, arrived late, AIP rejects, etc.

Only 105 voters did not sign their ballot and 512 ballots had witness issues.

Some voters used a national ballot form which did not request a witness signature.

No Senate District had more **than 1.6% of its Absentee ballots** rejected for no voter signature or witness issues.

HB 37 had one unsigned ballot and 6 Witness issues

HD 38 had no unsigned ballots and one Witness issue

HD 39 had no unsigned ballots and two Witness issues

HD 40 had no unsigned ballots and 13 Witness issues.

The 2020 Covid impacted Elections as well as the 2022 Special Primary Election are unique special cases.

The 2024 Elections Results show that Alaskan Voters returned quality countable absentee ballots. Less than 1.0% of all absentee ballots may be curable or 0.13% of all 2024 general election ballots may be curable.

Building an extensive cure process produces negligible benefits. Furthermore, the cure tool becomes an installed part of an all mail-in ballot process to damage Alaska Election Integrity.

5) Sec 43: Why have ballot drop boxes in Anchorage?

In 2024 as noted above, **82% of all ballots** are already received directly by other DoE processes. More than 20,000 absentee ballots **or 6% were returned** from outside of Alaska. Less than 40,000 Absentee Ballots were returned by in-state voters during October and November.

These Alaskan voters have applied for an ABM Ballot. They are not looking for a drop box.

The DoE has proposed to provide **postage paid envelopes** to make the ballot return process simpler and free.

Drop box issues can be summarized as:

Drop Boxes must be monitored and ballots collected frequently.

Drop Boxes have been vandalized, and ballots have been destroyed in lower 48

Drop Boxes have been utilized to facilitate election fraud to destroy Election Integrity.

The most severe failure in this recently amended section is:

The Municipality distributes Mail-In Ballots to most voters that can be dropped into its local white drop boxes.

The DoE does not distribute any Mail-In Ballots in Anchorage to any voters.

The DoE mails requested ABM Ballot packages to Anchorage Voters with reliable instructions to mail these ballots to the DoE.

The State election process and the Anchorage Municipality election process are significantly different.

Some voters are already confused, let's not make this much worse.

No Anchorage Muni drop boxes for Ballots that are not bulk mailed to voters.

Let's not create a new set of problems with unnecessary drop box deployments.

6) Sec 43: Synthetic Media is an interesting topic. But without major efforts at the federal and state level, **this is extremely premature for Alaska to adopt Campaign Finance Laws.**

Excessive confusing litigation may be the only outcome for this section.

- 7) **Sec 44: Do not include the quasi-judicial Redistricting Board in the Open Meeting Act universe.**

Thanks for the opportunity to provide my thoughts on these elections process changes.

Randy Ruedrich