



Legislative Council Staff

Research Note

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Bill Number

Senate Bill 16-074

Sponsors

Senator Crowder
Representative Dore

Short Title

**Mail Ballots Opt-out & Provide
24-hour Drop Boxes**

Research Analyst

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Status

The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee on April 4, 2016.

Summary

This bill allows an elector to opt out of automatically receiving mail ballots by completing a form. The form must have the option to opt out for a single election or for all elections. An elector who has opted out may also choose to resume receiving mail ballots through a process established by the Secretary of State (SOS).

The bill authorizes the SOS to use funds received from the federal Help America Vote Act grant to purchase 24-hour ballot drop boxes and video surveillance equipment for each county in the state, unless a county submits a written waiver requesting to opt out of receiving the new equipment.

Background

Current law requires all general, primary, odd-year, coordinated, recall, and congressional vacancy elections held on or after July 1, 2013, to be conducted by mail ballot. Under current law, electors may surrender their mail ballots and vote in person at a voter service and polling center (VSPC), or may supersede a ballot that has been voted and mailed by voting in person at a VSPC before the voted ballot is received into the statewide voter registration database by the county clerk.

Electors may choose to drop their voted mail ballots in drop boxes instead of either mailing them or returning them directly to a VSPC. All counties are required to provide at least one drop

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box; counties with more than 25,000 active electors are required to provide additional drop boxes based on population. According to SOS rules, drop boxes must be monitored either by an election official or by video surveillance.

Senate Action

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee (February 10, 2016). At the hearing, representatives from the SOS and the El Paso County Clerk & Recorder's Office testified in support of the bill. Representatives from the City and County of Denver Clerk and Recorder's Office, Colorado Common Cause, and New Era Colorado testified in opposition to the bill. A representative from the League of Women Voters testified in a neutral position regarding the bill.

The committee referred the bill, unamended, to the Committee on Finance.

Senate Finance Committee (February 16, 2016). At the hearing, a representative of the SOS testified to answer questions from the committee. The committee referred the bill, unamended, to the Committee on Appropriations.

Senate Appropriations Committee (February 26, 2016). The committee adopted amendment J.001 and referred the bill to the Senate Committee of the Whole. The amendment adds an appropriations clause to the bill.

Senate Second Reading (March 1, 2016). The Senate passed the bill on second reading with no amendments.

Senate Third Reading (March 2, 2016). The Senate passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

House Action

House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee (April 4, 2016). At the hearing, the Deputy Secretary of State and a private citizen testified in support of the bill. Representatives from the City and County of Denver Clerk and Recorder's Office, Coloradans for Voting Integrity, Common Cause, and Disability Law Colorado testified in opposition to the bill. A representative from the League of Women Voters testified in a neutral position regarding the bill. The committee postponed the bill indefinitely.