

SB 1054 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 4/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires each county clerk to provide live video feed of rooms where ballots are tallied and of ballot drop sites, until all ballots are tallied and all related duties are complete. The video feed must be accessible any time of day and must be recorded and made available to the public for not less than two years following a given election. It also grants the Secretary of State rulemaking authority for the process to ensure that the election security plan is not violated, and that no elector's vote is revealed.

Fiscal impact: The measure may have a fiscal impact, but a statement has not yet been issued.

Revenue impact: The measure may have a revenue impact, but a statement has not yet been issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Vote-by-mail

Oregon's vote-by-mail system is an election process in which voters receive and return their ballots through the mail, as opposed to traditional systems in which voters receive and cast their ballots in person at their local polling place. Ballots must be returned to the county clerk either through the mail or at a drop site. If returned by mail, the ballot must be mailed not later than the date of the election, and received by the county clerk not later than seven calendar days after the election date. This is determined by the postal indicator on the ballot, which is defined as a postmark or other indicator identified by the Secretary of State.

Counting Ballots and Certifying Results

Once a ballot is received by a county clerk's office, elections officials verify the signature on the return envelope. This is done by matching it against the voter registration card signature on file. Once the signature is verified, elections officials remove the ballot from the return identification ballot envelope. County elections offices may begin scanning ballots into a vote tally system up to seven days before election day, in accordance with a security plan approved by the Secretary of State. County elections officials must wait to release preliminary results until 8:00 p.m. on election day.

After election day, county elections officials resolve outstanding ballot issues, compile results, validate outcomes, and transmit results to the Secretary of State. Counties certify their election results to the Secretary of State no more than 20 days after election day. The Secretary of State must certify election results no later than 30 days following the election.

Persons authorized to watch receiving and counting of votes

Current law states that after ballots are mailed, the county clerk, if requested, shall permit authorized persons to watch the receiving and counting of votes. The authorization shall be in writing, shall be signed by an officer or its county affiliate of a political party, a candidate or the county clerk and shall be filed with the county clerk. The county clerk shall permit only so many persons as watchers as will not interfere with an orderly procedure at the office of the county clerk.