

SB 1509 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Carrier:** Sen. Boquist**Senate Committee On Rules****Action Date:** 02/24/20**Action:** Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)**Vote:** 3-0-1-1**Yeas:** 3 - Burdick, Dembrow, Roblan**Exc:** 1 - Boquist**Abs:** 1 - Baertschiger Jr**Fiscal:** No fiscal impact**Revenue:** No revenue impact**Prepared By:** Tyler Larson, LPRO Analyst**Meeting Dates:** 2/10, 2/24**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Authorizes county clerk to employ personnel as necessary to remove contents from ballot envelopes, rather than only open envelopes. Authorizes county clerk to, not sooner than seventh day before the date of an election, begin to remove contents from return identification and secrecy envelopes of ballots delivered to the county clerk, rather than only open envelopes. Requires that signature threshold for certificate of nomination made by individual electors be calculated based on total votes cast in most recent presidential election, rather than last general election. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Current process for processing ballot envelopes
- Benefit of clarification

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Requires that signature threshold for certificate of nomination made by individual electors be calculated based on total votes cast in most recent presidential election, rather than last general election. Removes effective date. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

In 1987, the Legislative Assembly enacted House Bill 2164, which allowed county clerks to conduct elections other than a recall or emergency election, held on any other date than a primary or general election, by mail. In 1998, Oregon voters enacted Ballot Measure 60, which requires primary and general elections to be conducted by mail. Current statute authorizes a county clerk to: 1) employ personnel as necessary to open envelopes, prepare ballots for counting, and count ballots; and, 2) not sooner than the seventh day before the date of an election, begin opening return identification and secrecy envelopes of ballots. These statutes do not explicitly authorize the county clerk or personnel employed by the county clerk to remove the contents from those envelopes.

Current statute allows for the nomination of a candidate by individual voters by preparing and filing a certificate of nomination. The certificate must include the signatures of eligible voters in the district equal to at least one percent of the total votes cast in the district for all candidates in the last general election.

Senate Bill 1509-A amends current statute to explicitly allow a county clerk and personnel employed by a county clerk to remove contents from envelopes as required to complete their election duties. It also requires a nomination of a candidate filed by individual voters to include signatures of eligible voters in the district equal to at least one percent of all votes cast in the district for all candidates in the most recent presidential election, rather than the last general election.