

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES, ELECTIONS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

January 28, 1999 Hearing Room D

3:30 P.M. Tapes 5 - 6

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Mark Simmons, Chair

Rep. Richard Devlin, Vice-Chair

Rep. Bruce Starr, Vice-Chair

Rep. Jason Atkinson

Rep. Chris Beck

Rep. Roger Beyer

Rep. Dan Gardener

Rep. Kitty Piercy

Rep. Jim Welsh

Rep. Max Williams

MEMBER EXCUSED: Rep. Randall Edwards

Rep. Kevin Mannix

STAFF PRESENT: Cletus B. Moore, Jr., Administrator

Kevin E. Wells, Administrative Support

MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD: Election Law ñ Informational Meeting

TAPE/#	Speaker	Comments
TAPE 5, A		
004	Chair Simmons	Calls meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. Introduces Colleen Sealock
<u>INFORMATIONAL MEETING</u>		
008	Colleen Sealock	Director of Election, State of Oregon. Introduces Charles Stern, Yamhill County Clerk. Summarizes technical election law bills. (EXHIBIT A)
032	Sealock	Explains HB 2207 deals with contributions and expenditures reports (C&E), giving chief petitioners a chance to file in April as they collect signatures. Emphasizes that it gives the public the ability to know who supports a measure. Acknowledges that a provision to require C&E on aggregate amount paid to each individual circulator will have to be reconsidered in light of the Buckley Decision (U.S. Supreme Court).
043	Sealock	States HB 2209 deals with technical revisions to campaign finance related to the VanNatta Decision (10 th Circuit Court). Concludes that this bill should be worked on in conjunction with HB 2415.
051	Sealock	Explains HB 2210 deals with introduction of a centralized voter registration system. Describes development of the system. Informs committee that a consultant will be submitting a detailed proposal and project outline in February.
062	Chair Simmons	Asks what the fiscal impact of HB 2210 will be.
064	Sealock	Answers that the estimate is \$6.2 million, but there will be firmer estimates in February when the consultant's proposal is returned. Informs committee that they will be able to choose what attributes they want in a registration system.
078	Chair Simmons	Inquires what the \$6.2 million is earmarked for at this time.
080	Sealock	Replies that they will be augmenting existing hardware, acquiring software and assess other hardware needs.
092	Chair Simmons	Questions the estimated cost.
096	Sealock	Underscores that the proposed system is sophisticated and will contain many applications; it will increase productivity and efficiency.
104	Chair Simmons	Asks if people will be able to download information.

105	Sealock	Responds in the affirmative and outlines potential uses of database.
109	Sealock	Indicates HB 2211 re-enacts previous language that reduces the size of the Voters Pamphlet and increases associated revenue.
124	Sealock	States that SB 368 cleans up election law with technical changes.
135	Sealock	Reviews SB 369 changes C&E reporting limits
138	Sealock	Describes the changes SB 370 makes to voter registration requirements. Reports that people who do not vote for two years will be moved into inactive status.
147	Sealock	Notes that the Oregon allows 15 days to verify signatures on a petition. Refers to SJR 3 as increasing that time frame.
172	Vice-Chair Devlin	Asks how signatures are going to be verified for petitions.
183	Sealock	Discusses procedure for rejecting a petition for a ballot measure through statistical sampling methods. Examines the court's ruling on that method and suggests how the issue can be remedied legislatively.
243	Vice-Chair Devlin	Asks if there is any discussion of limiting the number of elections.
252	Sealock	Reviews election cycle and associated details.
269	Vice-Chair Starr	Asks if the proposed centralized voter registration system will increase efficiency of signature verification.
278	Sealock	Replies in the affirmative. Comments on that and other technology to increase efficiency of the process.
300	Rep. Atkinson	Inquires as to the fiscal impact to counties of centralized voter registration system.
313	Sealock	Discusses the costs and resources required. Details challenges of designing the database. Comments that savings go to counties.
360	Rep. Williams	Asks about SB 369 and the logic of the C&E limit increase.
373	Sealock	Relates that the Senate has felt strongly about increasing it to this level. Comments that the level has not changed in 24 years.

392	Rep. Williams	Stresses this is important to discuss as inflation has changed the significance of these levels. Asks for costs of local campaigns.
410	Charles Stern	Yamhill County Clerk. Suggest the level needs to be raised because \$500 is no longer a realistic cost for a local campaign.
TAPE 6, A		
022	Rep. Williams	Asks what happens when a voter's registration is made inactive.
031	Sealock	Outlines how easy it is to renew registration. Details how inactive files are dealt with now.
048	Rep. Williams	Seeks clarification on what is meant by "last minute."
053	Sealock	Notes that while dynamics will change, an "inactive" will be able to renew and vote the day of an election.
068	Stern	Points out that what happens to inactive files depends on the county and what information is available. Explains that those who chronically do not respond are to be made inactive.
087	Chair Simmons	Inquires how inactive voter files would effect the 50% turnout requirement for bond measures.
091	Sealock	Emphasizes the importance of up-to-date records with advent of 50% turnout requirement to pass some ballot measures.
106	Vice-Chair Starr	Asks if inactive files will receive mail-in ballots.
111	Sealock	Replies in the affirmative, further comments that this is designed for people who want to vote for president but not in other elections.
120	Vice-Chair Starr	Asks how people will know if they are inactive.
121	Sealock	Indicates that voters are aware of election dates.
132	Stern	Comments that his office publicizes a date by which all ballots should have been mailed out, so that people know to inquire. Expresses that perception of fairness is paramount in all election law. Emphasizes county clerks must do everything possible to maintain voter files.
157	Vice-Chair Devlin	Asks how counties now discover voter files problems. Asks if the proposed

		database will correct existing problems.
166	Stern	Relates how his staff uses every method available to correct problems. Reiterates that the centralized system is in the planning stage. Lists some issues it should address.
226	Chair Simmons	Asks how SB 370 would effect out of state absentees.
233	Sealock	Replies that there will be no difference.
245	Chair Simmons	Asks how much savings are realized through vote by mail elections.
250	Sealock	Responds she will find the information and report back..
251	Stern	Answers about \$2 million per biennium statewide.
260	Chair Simmons	Asks if HB 2210 includes all the features needed to run the centralized voter registration system.
262	Sealock	Replies she does not know at this time, but will have more detail in February when she has the consultantís proposal.
272	Chair Simmons	Hearing no further questions, adjourns the meeting at 4:21 p.m.

Submitted By, Reviewed By,

Kevin E. Wells, Cletus B. Moore, Jr.,
Administrative Support Administrator

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

A ñ Written testimony, Colleen Sealock, Director of Elections, 1 p.