

Registering To Vote at the Secure Secretary of State Web Site

(HB 1160)

By Rep. Joe Miklosi

Summary: The 2008 elections brought a record number of people registering to vote in Colorado. Many County Clerks were overwhelmed by tens of thousands of registration forms to sort, verify, and data enter. Providing voters with the option to register to vote at the secure Secretary of State's website will make the registration, mail-in request, party affiliation update, and the change of address process easier and less expensive for election administrators, while also increasing accessibility for the voter.

This cost-effective option has been implemented in Arizona and Washington with Republican Secretary of States. Arizona, the first state to utilize this service, has shown record numbers of increases in voter registrations in their state as well as cost savings and a reduction in data entry errors. As Arizona's Secretary of State Jan Brewer says, "today, over 50% of Arizonan's register to vote electronically, thus reducing errors, registering faster, and easier." California is in the process of implementing this system. Colorado would be the fourth state in the union to implement this smart program.

This registration option will only be available for Colorado residents that have a signature stored in the Colorado driver's license database or the statewide voter registration database. The individual will answer the same eligibility questions and will have the same ID requirements as found on a paper registration form. This bill is officially supported by the Colorado County Clerks and Secretary of State Bernie Buescher.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE MERITS PROVIDED BY HB09-1160:

- **Saves time and money for county clerks and local election officials because it lessens data entry and administrative duties:**
 - In Maricopa County, AZ (Phoenix), the data entry savings in 2006 were the equivalent to eight full time employees.
- **Prevents common mistakes made on paper forms due to either lack of legibility or missing information, thus creating a more accurate and efficient voter database:**
 - The form will only successfully submit if the individual's personal information matches a record already in the voter database or the driver's license database.
 - The software will not successfully submit if the form is incomplete or if the appropriate check boxes are not checked.
- **Increases voter accessibility for many underrepresented demographics:**
 - Young people and highly mobile populations: Changing an address and other information will be more convenient through an online application.
 - People with Disabilities: Many will find it easier to fill out a registration application in their home.
 - Rural voters: Rural County Clerk's offices are often not easily accessible.
- **Is a secure method of registering to vote or making changes to a voter record:**
 - The WA Secretary of State has not seen a single instance of voter fraud with their online registration system.
 - If someone steals another's identity and attempts to fraudulently register to vote, the original signature from the legitimate voter's driver's license or registration form is used for signature verification on one's ballot. This creates a built-in safeguard to prevent voter fraud.
- **There is strong demand for this registration option:**
 - In Arizona, over 70% of all voter registrations were done electronically in 2007.