



WASHOE COUNTY
AB 321 Bill Review and Comments
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PROVIDING ALL MAIL-IN BALLOTS TO ALL ACTIVE REGISTERED VOTERS

During the 2020 election cycle a worldwide pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives, including the facilitation of elections throughout the year. In response, there was a declared emergency which required emergency measures regarding the administration of elections were enacted to provide for voting while keeping our citizens and staff safe from exposure to COVID-19. Providing mail-in ballots to all active voters was requested by the counties and approved by the Secretary of State in conjunction with providing at least one in-person voting location to facilitate same day registration for the primary election. This was again mandated by AB 4 in the 32nd Special Legislative session, which included the addition of more in-person voting locations.

For the 2020 General Election, Washoe county issued ballots to over 300,000 active registered voters and of those, 132,241 ballots were voted and returned (43.47% of registered voters voted by mail). This was a 237.3% increase in the number of ballots processed in Washoe County from our now 2nd highest number of ballots received, which was 39,209 ballots cast in the 2018 General Election. Important to note as these are only the numbers for ballots that were cast and do not include all ballots returned that we had to process including ballots returned as undeliverable (approximately 12,000 undeliverable and over 4,000 ballots challenged over the course of the 2020 General Election). All ballots, including those cast and those returned undeliverable or challenged require staff to process and facility space to handle and store. If all mail-in is passed, the number of ballots that need to be handled, processed and stored will continue to grow in the future.

Like Clark, and all other Nevada counties, the emergency situation required us to administer the election with all mail-in and still support in-person locations, albeit with smaller number of in-person locations than is typical for us, while also offering ballot drop-off locations which was new to this State. Our teams were able to adjust our operations and support this with very short-term solutions and the reallocation of staffing and other resources. For instance, due to other facility closures, we were able to move our poll worker training to another location for our six-week training schedule. This will not be available to us in future elections as closures end as our communities return to normal. We were also able to utilize unoccupied storage space within our County facility that again, will not e available to us as normal County operations resume, and employees return to work.





However, we cannot support all-mail in elections adequately in future elections without having the appropriate facilities and staffing levels. To do this properly and securely, we need additional facility space for processing, handling and storage of mail-in ballots, providing poll worker training and support, additional staffing and workstations for election workers, at least two additional full-time employees to administer the increase in program area, at least one additional technology services employee to support the additional technology requirements for this program area, and facility space for additional equipment such as ballot scanners, ballot handling and storage containers, ballot drop boxes, etc.

Finally, dramatically expanding the scope of our elections and implementation before we have the proper facilities, staffing and processes in place could negatively impact the integrity of our elections. It is requested that this implementation be phased in over a longer period and be fully integrated for the 2024 elections. We need adequate time and resources in order to locate, retrofit, and move our operations to accommodate all mail-in elections in this State and still support our in-person voting locations. Without the appropriate financial support to expand this area, we do not have the space needed under one roof, or between our two existing locations (our equipment supply center is operated at another location 4 miles away for our administrative, ballot counting, and tally locations at the Washoe County Administrative Complex – this has been and continues to be difficult to manage our current operations at two separate locations) to expand mail-in voting by 237%.

Although there are costs that cannot be fully determined at this time, locating a facility, moving, creating the appropriate offices and workstations, providing electrical to support our equipment’s power needs, storage space for our equipment, and other related costs, the below estimates are being provided for consideration (see separately submitted fiscal note documentation for a full breakdown of estimates):

Facilities and Staffing:	\$1,434,000.00
System Enhancements:	\$259,040.00
Mail-In Ballot Costs:	\$351,000.00
Equipment/Supplies:	\$162,000.00
Election Workers:	\$240,000.00
Miscellaneous:	\$43,000.00
Total:	\$2,489,040.00

AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR AB 321

- Sec. 7 Providing clarity to the process for those who assist a voter in marking and signing their ballot.
- Sec. 8 Moving the deadline to receive a ballot from the 7th day after the election to the 4th day





- Provides Clerks/Registrars sufficient time to process mail-in ballots, reconcile provisional ballots, perform post-election activities and prepare for the canvass of the vote
- Sec. 11 Allows for electronic signature verification (permissive)
- Sec. 13 Ballot processing can begin 15 days prior to the election
- Sec 46, 87 & 88 Allows County and City Clerks and Registrars to request a court order for confidentiality of personal information

