

1 SENATE BILL NO. 149

2 INTRODUCED BY B. BENNETT

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE SHALL
5 PAY THE POSTAGE COST FOR MAIL RETURN OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS; AMENDING SECTION 13-13-201;
6 AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

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8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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10 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Absentee ballot return postage.** (1) Absentee ballot return envelopes
11 mailed to electors by county election administrators pursuant to 13-13-214 must provide that postage is paid as
12 provided in subsection (2).

13 (2) The office of the secretary of state shall pay the postage for absentee ballots returned by mail.

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15 **Section 2.** Section 13-13-201, MCA, is amended to read:

16 **"13-13-201. Voting by absentee ballot -- procedures.** (1) A legally registered elector or provisionally
17 registered elector is entitled to vote by absentee ballot as provided for in this part.

18 (2) The elector may vote absentee by:

19 (a) marking the ballot in the manner specified;

20 (b) placing the marked ballot in the secrecy envelope, free of any identifying marks;

21 (c) placing the secrecy envelope containing one ballot for each election being held in the signature
22 envelope;

23 (d) executing the affirmation printed on the signature envelope; and

24 (e) returning the signature envelope with all appropriate enclosures by regular mail, postage paid
25 pursuant to [section 1], or by delivering it to:

26 (i) the election office;

27 (ii) a polling place within the elector's county;

28 (iii) pursuant to 13-13-229, the absentee election board or an authorized election official; or

29 (iv) in a mail ballot election held pursuant to Title 13, chapter 19, a designated place of deposit within the
30 elector's county.

1 (3) Except as provided in 13-21-206 and 13-21-226, in order for the ballot to be counted, each elector
2 shall return it in a manner that ensures the ballot is received prior to 8 p.m. on election day.

3 (4) A provisionally registered elector may also enclose in the outer signature envelope a copy of the
4 elector's photo identification showing the elector's name. The photo identification may be but is not limited to a
5 valid driver's license, a school district or postsecondary education photo identification, or a tribal photo
6 identification. If the provisionally registered elector does not enclose a photo identification, the elector may
7 enclose a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, notice of confirmation of voter registration issued
8 pursuant to 13-2-207, government check, or other government document that shows the elector's name and
9 current address."

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11 NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
12 integral part of Title 13, chapter 13, part 2, and the provisions of Title 13, chapter 13, part 2, apply to [section 1].

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14 NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2019.

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