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HOUSE BILL 2432

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Representative Hudgins

1 AN ACT Relating to a study on the state providing prepaid return  
2 postage for election ballots; creating a new section; and providing  
3 an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The secretary of state must conduct a  
6 study to assess the costs and benefits of the state paying the  
7 postage costs for all ballots returned by mail. The secretary of  
8 state must consult with county auditors, the United States postal  
9 service, stakeholder and nonpartisan advocacy groups focused on  
10 promoting voter turnout, and state and national groups focused on  
11 election policy and research.

12 (2) The study must analyze whether prepaid return postage would  
13 affect voter participation in state and local elections. The analysis  
14 must include an examination of voting trends and voter turnout, the  
15 experiences of other states, and a breakdown of the potential effect  
16 on different demographic groups and geographic areas. The study also  
17 must examine the fiscal impact of prepaid return postage, including  
18 the sources of funding, a comparison with the costs of maintaining  
19 and expanding ballot boxes and other ballot return options, the costs  
20 in different geographic areas of the state, and potential agreements  
21 with the postal service for mitigating postage costs.

1           (3) The secretary of state must submit a report to the governor  
2 and the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1,  
3 2018. The report must provide detailed findings with analysis of the  
4 study on the potential effects of prepaid return postage for election  
5 ballots on voter participation and turnout in state and local  
6 elections, including the impact different demographics of voters as  
7 well as geographic areas, and the fiscal impact of prepaid return  
8 postage. The report must include recommendations for implementing and  
9 funding prepaid return postage for election ballots, including ways  
10 to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the election process.

11           (4) This section expires June 30, 2019.

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