

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Horn
Vice Chairman Bedrosian
Mr. Barengo
Mrs. Cavnar

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Harmon
Mr. Hickey
Mr. Malone

GUESTS PRESENT: Senator Jean Ford
Russ McDonald, Washoe County

Chairman Horn called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. He informed the members present that they would consider SB 444 and summarized the bill.

SB 444: Requires that election results indicate number of votes each candidate received in each precinct.

Senator Jean Ford, Senate District #3, explained that SB 444 requires that in a general election and a primary election in even numbered years the election returns be prepared to show the number of votes each candidate receives in each precinct other than absentee votes. She added that this would not apply to the presidential preference primary, municipal or special elections. She indicated that this would not change election results in Clark County, but that in other counties the mailing precincts have been scrambled into one or more districts which SB 444 would not allow. She explained that under this bill all precincts would be counted separately including mailing precincts which would be valuable in targeting and strategy politically in general and even numbered year primary elections. She commented that this bill came about because there was some discussion of allowing scrambling of precincts in Clark County and this bill would prevent that from happening.

When Mrs. Cavnar asked why absentee ballots were excluded, Senator Ford responded that separating these ballots by precinct would cause mechanical headaches and be costly.

Russ McDonald representing Washoe County said that they were opposed to this bill because of the economy of lumping mailing precincts together. He added that this was in some ways detrimental in not allowing persons to engage in a lawful process but as in the case of Gerlach where the population is 125 with only 30 or 40 registered voters setting up a polling place with an election board for twelve hours was very costly. He added that Mrs. Rollins, Registrar of Voters in Washoe County, had testified in the Senate that in small towns it was very difficult to recruit people to work on election boards even though they were paid to do it. He said that with 250 mailing precincts in Washoe County this bill would result in the addition of 50 boxes and their main objection was the added cost to the county especially in light of impending spending caps.

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He commented that the percentage of response to mailing ballots was greater than the live vote and separating mailing precincts for individual count would delay election returns. Mr. McDonald further stated that Clark County had only eight mailing precincts which was no problem, but if this bill were passed, Washoe County would have a large initial expenditure plus salaries to election board workers for such a small amount of votes, and that he felt there was no real substance for politicians if this bill were enacted.

Mrs. Cavnar commented that she thought an individual precinct count was helpful in regard to questions on the ballot and suggested amending the bill to apply to only counties with a population of 200,000 or more.

Senator Ford said that if there was concern for Washoe County she would rather amend the bill by excluding mailing precincts than tie it to population and Mr. McDonald concurred. She commented that Senator Kosinski objected strongly to Washoe County's practice of lumping several mailing precincts into one district so that there was no breakdown on individual precincts.

Mr. Barengo commented that in Washoe County they did not cross Senatorial or Assembly district lines in lumping mailing precincts.

Mr. Bedrosian moved to amend SB 444 by inserting the words "and mailing precincts" after the word "votes" on page 1, line 9, and on page two, line 7 and line 38, seconded by Mrs. Cavnar and unanimously carried by the members present with Mr. Harmon, Mr. Hickey and Mr. Malone absent.

Mr. Horn requested that Mr. Bedrosian obtain the amendments from the bill drafter's office and reminded the members of the committee of the Election Committee party the next day.

There being no further business, Chairman Horn adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Hatch

Patricia Hatch
Assembly Attache

