

Date: 2-1-21

Senate Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Committee

Bill: 1st Sub. SB 92 Elections Amendments

Sponsor: Sen. Harper

Floor Sponsor: Rep. Thurston

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill: amends provisions relating to election law.

Discussion: Sen. Harper said a substitute has been worked out with the Lieutenant Governor's Office. The bill was replaced with the first substitute. Sen. Harper said this bill clarifies the level of detail required for reports of contributions, rules regarding disclosures, expenses related to travel, food, and lodging, cleans up reporting conflicts, deletes expired language, and includes two reports. One was requested by the Disability Law Center and the other was requested by the Legislature. Sen. Riebe said currently only one person works on this. She asked about the fiscal note. Sen. Harper said it comes down more to us complying with the law than it does to that person. Aside from a couple small updates, everything else can be handled easily by existing personnel. Sen. Riebe asked if there were any fines associated. Sen. Harper said it depends on the issue, but they do already have the ability to issue fines in code. Nate Crippes spoke on behalf of the Disability Law Center and said that many disabled Utahns have not had equal access to vote, particularly those who are blind or do not have the dexterity to use a pen. They are able to vote in-person, but not in the privacy of their homes by mail. This study would ensure that all Utahns have equal access to the vote. Ricky Hatch said the county clerks support this bill and are particularly interested in studying mobile voting. Nikila Venugopal said the ACLU of Utah supports this bill. They believe that voter security concerns are significant, and that there are cybersecurity concerns with online voting. Justin Lee spoke on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor's Office. There is no fiscal note because this changes definitions and clarifications, and won't require any additional enforcement. They hope that since the law will be more clear, there will actually be less enforcement required.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

N/V: 1

Outcome: Passed unanimously with a favorable recommendation.

Date: 2-1-21

Senate Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Committee

Bill: HB 28 Land Use and Eminent Domain Advisory Board

Sponsor: Rep. Handy

Floor Sponsor: Sen. Anderegg

UASD Position: Support

This Bill: addresses the Land Use and Eminent Domain Advisory Board.

Discussion: Rep. Handy explains that this repeals the sunset date for X board. Sen. Thatcher noted that it is critically important that every board and commission be reviewed every 5 years. He said if this bill is passed in its current form, the board is no longer subject to review. Sen. Vickers moved that the bill be amended to move the sunset date to 2026, rather than remove it altogether. Sen. Thatcher said a sunset review doesn't mean the committee or board will be removed. It just makes sure they are continuing to serve the process for which they were meant to serve. Sen. Iwamoto said that this board is being overseen, and the sunset dates cause stress on the stakeholders. As far as accountability goes, submit reports every year. Sen. Buxton asked if they review the eminent domain claims with UDOT as well. Rep. Handy said he believes that is true. Sen. Thatcher said he can't think of a single committee that has been eliminated that was still meeting, still posting minutes, and still fulfilling their statutory obligations. He said he will support the bill with the amendment and will oppose it without it. Rep. Handy said he's fine with the amendment.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

N/V: 1

Outcome: Passed unanimously as amended with a favorable recommendation.

Date: 2-1-21

Senate Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Committee

Bill: 1st Sub. HB 27 Public Information Website Modifications

Sponsor: Rep. Pierucci

Floor Sponsor: Sen. Johnson

UASD Position: Track

This Bill: amends provisions related to certain public information websites.

Discussion: The bill was replaced with the first substitute. Rep. Pierucci said this bill went through the full committee process last year, but was derailed by a minor amendment. After the transparency website was moved to the Auditor's Office, the language about managing these websites was left in the division of finance's section of the code. The majority of the bill is just upgrades to code references. Auditor John Dougall said in 2019 this bill codifies the restructuring of the website and the other activities done in his office in regard to transparency. Sen. Riebe asked if there is any code requiring a translation function on Utah government websites. Mr. Dougall said he is not aware of that, but will note that feedback.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

N/V: 1

Outcome: Passed unanimously with a favorable recommendation.