

2-5-21

House Government Operations Committee

Bill: HB 197, Voter Affiliation Amendments

Sponsor: Rep. Teuscher

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill: amends the Election Code relating to a voter's change of political party affiliation.

Discussion: The sponsor asked that the 2nd substitute HB 197 be adopted. This bill requires that, in an even numbered year, any changes to a voter's affiliation requested between March 31st and the primary election will not go in effect until have the midterm election. This excludes new voters. The 2nd substitute changes the date people cannot change their voter affiliation from January 1st to March 31st. The sponsor said the primary process is to be used to determine the party's best candidate. Rep. Teuscher continued by saying this bill ensures no gamesmanship is used. Rep. Dailey-Provost asked if the sponsor cared more about the will of the party than the will of the voters. The sponsor said the will of voters is demonstrated in the party process. The Director of Elections said that in the most recent election there were 105,000 individuals who changed their party affiliation at least once between April 25th and the primary election. Members of the public voiced their opposition for this bill. The Republican Party of Utah supports this bill. The Weber County Clerk Auditor is neutral on this bill. The Utah Eagle Forum supports this bill. 2nd substitute to HB 197 was adopted.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 3

N/V: 1

Outcome: 2nd Substitute HB 197 passed out of committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: HB 75, Municipal Alternative Voting Methods Pilot Project Amendments

Sponsor: Rep. Stenquist

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill: his bill amends provisions relating to the Municipal Alternative Voting Methods Pilot Project.

Discussion: The sponsor requested 1st substitute be adopted. The sponsor said the Bill adjusts a couple things in the pilot program for rank choice voting. The sponsor said there has been some confusion as to who makes the final decision on who decides if a municipality will participate in a municipal election. The sponsor said this bill clarifies that the legislative body is who makes that choice. It changes the date when a municipality can decide to participate in the pilot program. The sponsor said the reason for this bill is to allow a municipality to do rank choice voting, even if the county doesn't want them to. Utah County, who has participated in the pilot program, said ranked choice voting has worked really well for their County. Utah County expressed support for the substitute because it allows more cities to opt into the program. The Chair of the Committee voiced concern about the relationship between the city and county in this bill. Rep. Lyman asked what would happen after the pilot program. The sponsor said if this pilot program is successful, the Legislature could remove the sunset date. The Director of Utah Rank Choice Voting voiced support for this bill. The Weber County Clerk Auditor voiced opposition to this bill. Members of the public voiced their support and opposition to this bill. 1st substitute to HB 75 adopted.

Yeas: 10

Nays: 0

N/V: 1

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 75 passed out of committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: HB 114, Emergency Executive Powers Amendments

Sponsor: Rep. Stoddard

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Oppose

This Bill: makes changes to the epidemic emergency procurement process.

Discussion: The sponsor said this bill came about after issues with the emergency percurrent process last spring. The sponsor said this bill requires the Governor to provide the Legislature with a copy of an emergency procurement contract. This bill also reduces the amount the Governor can spend for an emergency procurement during an epidemic or pandemic.

Amendment number one was added to this bill. The amendment changes “irreparable” harm to “substantial” harm. Rep. Thurston voiced his support for this bill.

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

N/V: 2

Outcome: Passed out of committee, as amended, with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: SB 72, Open and Public Meeting Amendments

Sponsor: Sen. Fillmore

Floor Sponsor: Rep. Pulsipher

UASD Position: Support

This Bill: modifies a provision relating to open and public meetings

Discussion: The sponsor said there is no provision in the Utah Code that states how to end a closed meeting and return to open session. A public body may not take a vote during a closed meeting, except on a motion to end the closed meeting.

Yeas: 10

Nays: 0

N/V: 1

Outcome: Passed out of committee with a favorable recommendation.