

House Government Operations Committee

February 25th, 2025

Bill: 3rd substitute HB 270 – Voter Registration Records Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Trevor Lee

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Support

This Bill amends provisions relating to voter registration records.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 3rd substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. The 3rd substitute adds a coordinating clause with SB 191, and it amends the voter registration form to incorporate recent changes, offering voters the option to receive electronic communications from their affiliated political party. It also creates a voter registration subscription service for state political parties, allowing them to verify party membership. Additionally, the 3rd substitute includes provisions for releasing information about the number of at-risk voters, both statewide and within individual state House districts, to political parties. The Bill also modifies and recodifies provisions related to the accessibility of voter registration records based on the requester's capacity and establishes requirements for obtaining additional privacy protection for voter registration records. It specifies that, effective before May 7, 2025, any voter registration record previously classified as private, without a justification, will be reclassified as public unless the voter takes action to secure additional protection. The Bill also mandates election officers to notify voters affected by this reclassification, providing them the opportunity to apply for extra protection. It introduces the assignment of new voter identification numbers, establishes further requirements to ensure the removal of deceased individuals from voter registration records, and modifies penalties related to the unlawful disclosure of voter registration information.

Yeas: 11

Nays: 0

N/V: 2

Outcome: 3rd substitute HB 270 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 1st substitute HB 513 – Utah Commission for Earthquake Preparedness

Sponsor: Representative Thomas W. Peterson

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Support

This Bill creates the Utah Commission for Earthquake Preparedness.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that the Bill restructures last year's earthquake commission and addresses concerns raised by the Senate regarding the previous version by creating the Utah Commission for Earthquakes ("Commission"). Ari Browning, CEO of Envision Utah, highlighted that the state faces a 50% chance of experiencing a major earthquake within the next 50 years, which could have severe consequences for society, the economy, and resources. He explained that the Bill aims to prioritize earthquake preparedness research and includes mechanisms to track the Commission's progress.

Representative Cutler inquired about the large size of the Commission. The sponsor explained that membership was intentionally limited to individuals with diverse perspectives and expertise in earthquake mitigation, while Browning emphasized the importance of bringing all viewpoints together. The sponsor added that it is crucial for all Commission members to be prepared if an earthquake occurs. Representative Maloy asked how the scale of future earthquakes could be estimated. Representative Peterson clarified that changes in the Wasatch Fault could help assess the potential magnitude of earthquakes Utah should prepare for. Representative Maloy then asked what constitutes a major earthquake. Bill Keech, State Geologist, explained that any earthquake larger than 6.1 on the Richter scale would result in ground breakage and significant impact.

Representative Thompson asked what the Commission hopes to achieve that wasn't accomplished after the Magna earthquake. The sponsor explained that while the first commission focused on preparedness, this new Commission would address infrastructure risks and other duties outlined in lines 116-148. Representative Thompson further inquired whether there had been discussions regarding voting versus advisory members. The sponsor clarified that the Commission is not a policy-making body but serves as a platform for industry professionals to collaborate. He expressed openness to removing members if identified by the Committee, though he viewed all members as vital to the discussions.

Representative Stoddard asked if the sponsor would be open to adding the Legislature to Section 3. The sponsor confirmed that he had no objection to this addition if the Legislature is not included already. Representative Pierucci raised concerns about whether the responsibility should fall under the State Geologist's Office. Mr. Keech responded that, while the Office addresses these issues, the Commission would broaden the scope of discussions. Representative Pierucci expressed reservations about creating another Commission, given the need for careful consideration in doing so. Representative Loubet asked if lines 126-129 would include the Legislature in the reporting requirement. The sponsor agreed to revise the language for clarity on the report's recipients to include the Legislature. Representative Loubet also inquired if the Commission would educate the community about earthquake mitigation resources. The sponsor confirmed that community education was a key component of the Bill.

Finally, Representative Maloy asked whether the Commission would focus only on earthquakes or also address other disasters such as floods or fires. The sponsor clarified that the Commission's focus would remain primarily on earthquake preparedness, as it is not a response

team. Chris Hamlet, Director of the Utah Division of Emergency Management, and public member Kael Weston spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 3

N/V: 3

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 513 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

UASD