

April 27, 2023

Dear House Finance Committee,

Today you will be hearing SB276, the elections omnibus bill. Even though your committee's focus is the finance aspects of the bill, you are all elected officials, know about elections and have the opportunity to discuss and amend any part of the bill.

LWV of Colorado is asking for some technical changes to SB276. They are all common-sense, simple-to-understand amendments which we believe are not controversial, but which will clarify and improve our election process, especially election integrity. Since some amendments passed in House State Affairs, SB276 has to go back to the Senate anyway; these proposed changes will not further complicate the bill's passage. You can find formatted amendment language in the attached document. We hope that you will discuss these proposed changes with the bill sponsor during today's hearing.

1. Sections 19 and 20 – Replace “instant runoff voting” with another statutory, but more inclusive, term: “a ranked voting method”
2. Sections 24 and 25 – Allow unaffiliated voters to be election watchers since they constitute more than 40% of all voters and because they have a stake, i.e., can vote, in all elections.
3. Sections 34 and 36 – Keep the option for all counties to start counting early, rather than mandate early counting, and strike language about “secrecy of the counting procedures” since the procedures should be transparent.
4. Section 37 – The canvass board should have more decision-making power over recounts; the logic and accuracy tests should be allowed to collect more data; and recounts may provide more accurate information if they use a different counting method from the original method, e.g., hand counting instead of redoing a machine count

Some sections on pre-registrants were removed from the bill on the Senate floor, presumably while awaiting a legal ruling on Amendment 76. We are grateful for the removal of those sections, but also a bit puzzled why Sections 5 and 6 were not also removed at the same time. The 4 proposed changes above and removal of Sections 5 and 6 from the bill could be bundled into one amendment.

Thank you for your consideration of these simple, but important, improvements to SB276.

Sincerely,
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Cc: LWVCO Legislative Liaison Andrea Wilkins