

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS28643 / H0223

This legislation addresses the issue of "ballot harvesting" - which is the practice of third party individuals and groups, many of them political activists or political parties, "harvesting" absentee or mail ballots from voters and then delivering them to election officials for processing and counting. This legislation would prohibit this practice by limiting ballot handling to those authorized to do so pursuant to Idaho law.

Idaho does not currently experience significant problems with ballot harvesting. However, it has become a widespread practice in some other states, where its practice places many voters' ballots, and the sanctity of their vote, into the hands of those who may have a conflicted interest in the election's outcome. These individuals may have a political incentive to deliver to the county clerk certain ballots, but not others, based on the ballot harvester's perception or knowledge of the voter's choices. Indeed, in 2018, there was at least one U.S. Congressional election in which the election outcome was likely changed by a ballot harvester withholding or tampering with absentee ballots. The purpose of this legislation is to help prevent such an outcome in any Idaho elections.

The specifics of this legislation are based on the recommendations of the bipartisan Commission on Federal Election Reform, in their 2005 report Building Confidence in U.S. Elections, and would limit ballot handling to election officials, U.S. Mail carriers, employees of nationwide parcel delivery businesses, and acknowledged family members.

FISCAL NOTE

Since Idaho does not currently have significant problems with ballot harvesting, it is not expected that this legislation would result in any additional convictions, or costs associated with such.

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DISCLAIMER: This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).