

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS29733C1 / S1376

Idaho is one of only a handful of states without a law prohibiting the collection of absentee ballots by people outside the voter's trusted circle of family, caregiver or household member. The wholesale collection of absentee ballots increases the chance of election fraud. This was specifically called out in 2005 by the Commission on Federal Election Reform chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker. They declared that "absentee ballots remain the largest source of potential voter fraud." They were concerned about vulnerable voters being coerced by more powerful people. "Citizens who vote at home, at nursing homes, at the workplace, or in church are more susceptible to pressure, overt and subtle, or to intimidation. Vote buying schemes are far more difficult to detect when citizens vote by mail," the Carter-Baker report said.

With this historic perspective in mind, Idaho must add protections for absentee ballots to our election laws. This bill specifies the people who can help an absentee voter by delivering their completed ballot to the county elections department. It also limits to six, the total number of ballots any one voter can deliver, including their own.

FISCAL NOTE

There may be an increased need for staffing at the county elections offices in order to properly receive the delivered ballots. This staffing should be augmented by a grant to the counties from the SOS. Election security is a state responsibility as well as a county priority, and the SOS should work with JFAC to adequately fund the security of our county election process in Idaho.

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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).