



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**August 11, 2011**

**Ordinance 15523**

**Proposed No.** 2006-0191.2

**Sponsors** Patterson, Ferguson and Phillips

1 AN ORDINANCE authorizing the conduct of vote-by-mail  
 2 elections and directing the director of the records, elections  
 3 and licensing services division to conduct all primary,  
 4 special and general elections in King County entirely by  
 5 mail ballot beginning on a date in 2007 or in 2008 to be  
 6 determined by the director only after certain conditions are  
 7 met.

8 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

9 **SECTION 1. Findings:**

10 A. The number of King County voters who vote by absentee ballot currently  
 11 fluctuates between approximately seventy and eighty percent in any given election.

12 B. In the 2005 primary, 81.73 percent of the ballots cast in King County were  
 13 cast by mail.

14 C. Nearly sixty percent of all registered voters in King County are currently  
 15 registered to automatically vote by absentee ballot.

16 D. The current dual system of conducting elections by mail and polls in King  
 17 County requires five hundred twenty-eight polling locations and close to four thousand  
 18 poll workers for a countywide election, plus a full scale mail ballot processing operation  
 19 and facility.

20 E. In 2005, the Washington state Legislature amended Title 29A RCW to allow  
21 counties the option of conducting all elections by mail.

22 F. As of April 2006, thirty-four of the thirty-nine counties in Washington state  
23 have adopted legislation to authorize all mail voting.

24 G. Conducting all elections in King County by mail will allow the county to  
25 focus resources and systems to gain efficiencies and increase security by limiting  
26 dependency on human interaction and ballot handling.

27 SECTION 2. The director of the records, elections and licensing services division  
28 is directed to conduct all King County elections entirely by mail ballot in accordance with  
29 state law beginning on a date in 2007 or in 2008 determined by the director only after the  
30 following conditions have been met:

31 A. A new director of records, elections and licensing services and a  
32 superintendent of elections have been appointed by the executive and confirmed by the  
33 council;

34 B. The director and elections section staff have completed the cultural change  
35 and management training recommended by the citizens' election oversight committee and  
36 the independent task force on elections; and

37 C. The executive has transmitted and the council has approved by motion a plan  
38 with cost estimates for regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes. The plan shall be  
39 filed in the form of an original and ten copies with the clerk of the council, who will  
40 retain the original and will forward copies to each councilmember and to the lead staff of  
41 the committee-of-the-whole.

42            SECTION 3. There shall be an electronic tracking system established for tracking  
43 ballots so that voters can, through use of the Internet, follow the movement of their  
44 ballots as they move from King County to the voter and back to King County for  
45 counting and crediting the voter for voting.

46            SECTION 4. Prior to implementation of vote-by-mail elections, the executive  
47 shall transmit to the council a report that identifies the estimated capital and operating  
48 cost of regional voting centers and drop boxes, including staffing costs for temporary  
49 workers and sheriff deputies that may be needed at regional voting centers and in the  
50 transport of ballots, a map identifying the location of regional voting centers and drop  
51 boxes and security measures that will be put in place for regional voting centers and drop  
52 boxes. Implementation of vote-by-mail shall not occur until the council has approved the  
53 report by motion. The report shall be filed in the form of an original and ten copies with  
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55 the clerk of the council, who will retain the original and will forward copies to each  
56 councilmember and to the lead staff of the committee-of-the-whole.  
57

Ordinance 15523 was introduced on 5/1/2006 and passed as amended by the  
Metropolitan King County Council on 6/19/2006, by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Patterson, Mr. Constantine and  
Mr. Ferguson  
No: 4 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Ms. Hague, Ms. Lambert and Mr. Dunn  
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Larry Gossett, Chair

ATTEST:

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Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

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Dow Constantine, County Executive

**Attachments:** None