



**MODEL TESTIMONY**  
**Paperless Voter Registration**

Testimony of [*Organization Name*] in Support of HB/SB \_\_\_\_\_

[*Committee*]

[*Date*]

[*Organization Name*] submits the following comments in support of House/Senate Bill \_\_\_\_\_, the “[*state*] Paperless Voter Registration Act.” [*Insert brief description of organization here.*]

The purpose of HB/SB \_\_\_\_\_ is to streamline voter registration and ensure compliance with federal election law by requiring state agencies that are designated voter registration agencies to offer paperless voter registration to their clients. A “paperless” system registers new voters by electronically transferring the registrant’s information from the government agency’s computer system to the county board of elections. As a result, the county boards of elections will be able to verify electronically that an applicant is not already registered in another county and will be notified when one of the county’s registered voters attempts to register in another county. While these data comparison processes would not allow election officials to purge voters (other than by the methods prescribed in the NVRA), it would provide evidence of a possible duplication and justify notifying the applicant. These improvements will result in reduced staff time and cost, more accurate list maintenance, and increased voter registrations.

Using technology to manage voter registration more effectively is a growing national trend. Numerous states have transitioned to online registration, and although the types of technology used have varied, the consistent result is that each state is now reaping measurable rewards. Individual applicants for voter registration are able to use the Internet to register in some states. They have shown that online registration is significantly cheaper than paper registration. In Washington State, for example, the cost per registrant is 45 cents compared to \$1.55 for paper, while in Maricopa County, Arizona, the cost is 3 cents compared to 83 cents. Since Kansas transitioned to an electronic voter information system, some county officials have reported that registration-related workloads have been reduced by half. After Delaware instituted paperless registration at its driver’s license agency, registration transaction time fell from 90 seconds to 30 seconds. In fact, paperless registration has been so successful in Delaware that the state will soon implement the same process at its public assistance agencies and its Department of Labor. Clearly, paperless registration results in measurable cost savings and efficiency gains.

The provisions in HB/SB \_\_\_\_\_ are necessary to improve [*state's*] voter registration system. Specifically, Sections 3(c) and 3(d) will reduce the time and cost required to process a voter registration application. Election personnel will no longer need to spend time manually entering applicant information into the statewide voter registration database (which is already required by the Help America Vote Act of 2002) because data will be entered into the system through electronic transmission from the agencies. Employees will therefore have more time to spend on other tasks. The Board of Elections will also likely save money because, with these greater efficiencies, they will no longer need to hire as many temporary employees during busy periods leading up to major elections. Likewise, electronic verification and notification will also reduce the time spent on registrations and reduce the need for extra staff.

In addition to reducing time and cost, Sections 3(c) and 3(d) will also ensure more accurate list maintenance. Electronic applications eliminate the risk that an employee will be unable to read an applicant's handwriting or make a clerical error when manually entering information into the electronic system. Electronic verification and notification will ensure that voter lists across counties are accurate and not in conflict with each other.

Finally, the paperless registration procedures set out in Sections 3(c), 3(d) and 4 will ensure that all clients of those agencies will be offered the opportunity to register to vote and that their registrations will be automatically entered into the system electronically. Since the advent of "agency registration" under Section 7 of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA), there has been widespread noncompliance at public assistance and disability agencies in many states. Institutionalizing paperless registration at these agencies—so that, for example, the computerized intake process cannot be completed without the offer of voter registration—will have a dramatic impact on the historic under-representation of the clients of these agencies in the electorate. By requiring agencies to offer electronic registration and track registration data, HB/SB \_\_\_\_\_ will help to ensure that (state) agencies offer registration to all eligible individuals as the NVRA requires, and will mitigate (state)'s susceptibility to costly investigations and litigation brought against states that are out of compliance.

[*Organization Name*] applauds Senator/Representative [*legislative sponsor*] for introducing this path-breaking legislation, and we urge swift passage. HB/SB \_\_\_\_\_ is a simple way of improving [*state*]'s voter registration process by saving time and money, improving accuracy, and ensuring that voter registration agencies comply with federal law.