

absentee ballot statutes.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay, where in the absentee ballot statutes does it say that the person who opens the envelope will not know or will not look at the ballot? I guess, you know, what I'm trying to figure out is in some of these small towns elections the secrecy of the ballot is important, and maybe I'm being too hypothetical about things. But is it possible to have a situation where some nosy person is sitting there opening the ballot with the name on the outside and looking at the ballot and putting it over in the pile, and by the time they're done they know how everybody in town's voted.

SENATOR CUDABACK: I guess anything is possible, Senator Beutler, and under any conditions. But the envelope is opened, taken out, laid over here, there are three...I think on some bond issues it even...the statutes require three noninterested parties. And so I think they usually even try to pick them from out of the subdivision. I think most places try to pick these from...so they are not an interested party, unbiased in other words. And I think they're...they follow these guidelines. Now if they wish to cheat in some manner, I guess the fraud, I think penalty is a, what, a \$10,000 fine, a five...or something like this if they do this. And I guess, if they wish to do that I guess they could find a way for that.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yeah, well I don't know if they'd be cheating. It would just be a matter of privacy of the ballot, or secrecy of the ballot. I'll try to look back at the absentee statutes and see what would preclude that sort of thing.

SENATOR CUDABACK: I think it's in Section 30...I think in Volume 32, I believe.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay. Another thing I'm interested in, just as a general question relating to mail elections. You know our elections have been very clean in recent decades because of the way we've tightened down over time. And now I perceive this as a going back and loosening up a little bit and, you know, maybe we were too tight, maybe we need to loosen up. But let's say, for example...I mean the big thing that comes in in a mail election, I suppose, is that you're going through a process where a lot more people are involved in the election. That is, there's a mailman who takes the ballot from your house. There's