

CLERK: Senator Witek would move to amend with AM4032. (See page 1455 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I'm have a Page send out this amendment that I'm trying to get adopted here. We've talked a lot about how we need to evaluate the mail-in ballot. This is the first time that we're attempting to do it in the state. I, personally, was more comfortable keeping it to a smaller pilot program so that we could figure out what the problems were and then correcting those before we go statewide. But, a majority of members voted to make it statewide and it does include what I would consider some fairly large elections, especially in the bond issue area, so this could really impact my district which will more than likely be seeking a bond in a very short period of time and I'd like to have some of my concerns ironed out before we go ahead and try it through the mail-in balloting. The amendment would require the election commissioner or county clerk to do an evaluation of the mail-in elections and it would require the Secretary of State to draft a uniform report from the information that the election commissioners have given them on the form that they would require. I think the Deputy Secretary of State is very capable in coming up with a form. He's been very involved in a lot of the election areas through the Government Committee so I don't think there's really any limit that I wanted to put on, specifically, on what items could be evaluated. It would just be, in their opinion, what items would be most important to know about when we begin mail-in balloting and if any corrections need to be made that we would be aware of here in the Legislature. And this amendment would require a minimum that the report include an evaluation of the cost involved and how the procedures and verifications were handled. The cost has been an issue that people who support 964 have continually said it will save them money. I, personally, think that with the verification process on every signature, it will be very labor intensive and I don't believe it will save any money whatsoever, but individuals who support the bill think it will save money. So I'd like to have some information as to whether we have remained neutral on the cost or if we have incurred an increase in cost. I'd like to know that once we start down this path of mail-in ballots. Hopefully, it will also give us some information on voter fraud. We've talked about some of those