

**SUBJECT:** Authorizing the secretary of state to use alternate delivery methods

**COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 12 ayes — Solomons, Menendez, Cook, Craddick, Farabee, Geren, Harless, Hilderbran, Lucio, Maldonado, Swinford, S. Turner

0 nays

3 absent — Gallego, Jones, Oliveira

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 23 — 30-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

**WITNESSES:** No public hearing

**DIGEST:** SB 1703 would authorize the Secretary of State, when required by law to make a delivery using registered or certified mail, to use an alternative method of delivery if the secretary of state determined that the alternate method would provide similar levels of accountability, timeliness, security, and quality of service.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2009.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** SB 1703 would enable the secretary of state to cut costs associated with the delivery of mail and other items by authorizing an alternate method of delivery so long as the method would provide similar levels of reliability and security. Currently, the U. S. Postal Service charges a minimum of \$5.54 to send a letter by first-class certified mail with a return receipt. Fees for registered mail start at \$10.60. These fees cost the secretary of state thousands of dollars per month, a number expected to rise steadily over the foreseeable future if the postal service continues its trend of increasing certified and registered mail rates. If enacted, SB 1703 would allow the secretary of state to use less costly, more efficient delivery methods, such as electronic delivery, if appropriate.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

No apparent opposition.