

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1324

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to cancellation of the 2012 presidential primary.

Brief Description: Canceling the 2012 presidential primary.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton and McCoy; by request of Secretary of State and Governor Gregoire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 2/16/11, 4/6/11 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Cancels the 2012 presidential primary.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Condotta, Darneille, Dunshee, McCoy and Miloscia.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Hurst.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Historically, political parties in Washington selected their nominee for President and allocated their delegates to the national nominating conventions through party caucuses. In 1989 the Legislature approved an Initiative to the Legislature, which established the presidential primary. The Secretary of State must conduct a primary each presidential election year to allow citizens the opportunity to express their preferences as to the major political party candidates for President. Following the primary, the state and county

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committees of each major political party are provided lists of voters who participated in their party's presidential primary.

The original legislation required delegates to the party national conventions to be allocated to each candidate for President based on the results of the preference primary. Votes cast for a particular presidential candidate were considered votes cast for delegate positions committed to that candidate. The selection of actual individuals as delegates remained a party function. In 1995 the Legislature amended the law to allow party delegates to be allocated in whole or in part based on the results of party precinct caucuses, rather than the preference primary. The 1995 legislation also required the Office of the Secretary of State to amend its administrative rules to comply with the major political parties' national and state rules.

Summary of Bill:

No presidential primary may be held in 2012.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The state cannot afford to pay for a presidential primary this year. The estimated cost of the primary is \$10 million.

(Opposed) The Washington State Democratic Central Committee is opposed to the bill. There has been a lot of criticism in the past regarding the parties not using the primary. The decision by the parties on whether to use the primary will be made by April 30. The bill overturns legislation enacted in 1989. The feeling behind the enactment was that the caucus system did not represent all the voters of the state. Look at creative ways to deal with the issue, such as polls. A lot could be done online in terms of registering voters.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Sam Reed, Secretary of State.

(Opposed) Cody Arledge, Washington State Democratic Central Committee; and David Anderson.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.