## SECOND ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5171

State of Washington 62nd Legislature 2011 Regular Session

**By** Senate Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Hobbs, Roach, Swecker, Pridemore, Shin, King, Kilmer, Hill, Keiser, and McAuliffe; by request of Secretary of State)

READ FIRST TIME 02/15/11.

AN ACT Relating to facilitating voting for service and overseas 1 2 voters; amending RCW 29A.04.255, 29A.04.311, 29A.04.321, 29A.16.040, 29A.24.040, 29A.24.050, 29A.24.131, 29A.24.141, 29A.24.171, 29A.24.181, 3 29A.24.191, 29A.24.311, 29A.28.041, 29A.40.070, 29A.40.091, 29A.40.110, 4 29A.56.030, 29A.60.190, 29A.60.190, 29A.60.240, 29A.64.011, 29A.64.030, 5 29A.68.011, 29A.76.010, and 42.12.070; reenacting and amending RCW 6 7 29A.04.330 and 29A.36.010; repealing RCW 29A.04.310, 29A.24.151, 29A.24.161, 29A.24.210, 29A.24.211, 29A.36.011, and 8 29A.40.150; repealing 2005 c 2 s 15; prescribing penalties; providing effective 9 10 dates; providing an expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

12 Sec. 1. RCW 29A.04.255 and 2004 c 266 s 5 are each amended to read 13 as follows:

The secretary of state or a county auditor shall accept and file in his or her office electronic ((facsimile)) transmissions of the following documents:

- 17 (1) Declarations of candidacy;
- 18 (2) County canvass reports;
- 19 (3) Voters' pamphlet statements;

(4) Arguments for and against ballot measures that will appear in
 a voters' pamphlet;

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(5) Requests for recounts;

4 (6) Certification of candidates and measures by the secretary of 5 state;

6 (7) Direction by the secretary of state for the conduct of a 7 ((mandatory)) recount;

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(8) Requests for ((absentee)) ballots;

9 (9) Any other election related document authorized by rule adopted 10 by the secretary of state under RCW ((<del>29A.04.610</del>)) <u>29A.04.611</u>.

11 The acceptance by the secretary of state or the county auditor is 12 conditional upon the document being filed in a timely manner, being 13 legible, and otherwise satisfying the requirements of state law or 14 rules with respect to form and content.

15 ((If the original copy of a document must be signed and a copy of 16 the document is filed by facsimile transmission under this section, the 17 original copy must be subsequently filed with the official with whom the facsimile was filed. The original copy must be filed by a deadline 18 established-by-the-secretary-by-rule.)) The secretary may by rule 19 require that the original of any document, a copy of which is filed by 20 ((facsimile)) electronic transmission under this section, also be filed 21 22 by a deadline established by the secretary by rule.

23 **Sec. 2.** RCW 29A.04.311 and 2006 c 344 s 1 are each amended to read 24 as follows:

((Nominating)) <u>P</u>rimaries for general elections to be held in November, and the election of precinct committee officers, must be held on the ((third)) <u>first</u> Tuesday of the preceding August.

28 **Sec. 3.** RCW 29A.04.321 and 2009 c 413 s 2 are each amended to read 29 as follows:

(1) All state, county, city, town, and district general elections for the election of federal, state, legislative, judicial, county, city, town, and district officers, and for the submission to the voters of the state, county, city, town, or district of any measure for their adoption and approval or rejection, shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November, in the year in which they may be called. A statewide general election shall be held on the first

Tuesday after the first Monday of November of each year. However, the 1 2 statewide general election held in odd-numbered years shall be limited to (a) city, town, and district general elections as provided for in 3 RCW 29A.04.330, or as otherwise provided by law; (b) the election of 4 federal officers for the remainder of any unexpired terms in the 5 membership of either branch of the Congress of the United States; (c) 6 7 the election of state and county officers for the remainder of any unexpired terms of offices created by or whose duties are described in 8 Article II, section 15, Article III, sections 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 9 10 and 23, and Article IV, sections 3 and 5 of the state Constitution and RCW 2.06.080; (d) the election of county officers in any county 11 12 governed by a charter containing provisions calling for general county 13 elections at this time; and (e) the approval or rejection of state 14 measures, including proposed constitutional amendments, matters pertaining to any proposed constitutional convention, initiative 15 16 measures and referendum measures proposed by the electorate, referendum 17 bills, and any other matter provided by the legislature for submission 18 to the electorate.

19 (2) A county legislative authority may call a special county 20 election by presenting a resolution to the county auditor prior to the 21 proposed election date. A special election called by the county 22 legislative authority shall be held on one of the following dates as 23 decided by such governing body:

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(b) The third Tuesday in April until January 1, 2013;

(a) The second Tuesday in February;

26 (c) The fourth Tuesday in April on or after January 1, 2013;

27 (((-))) (d) The day of the primary as specified by RCW 29A.04.311; 28 or

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(((d))) <u>(e)</u> The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

(3) A resolution calling for a special election on a date set forth 30 in subsection (2)(a) ((and (b))) through (c) of this section must be 31 32 presented to the county auditor at least ((forty-five)) forty-six days prior to the election date. A resolution calling for a special 33 election on a date set forth in subsection (2)(((c) or)) (d) of this 34 section must be presented to the county auditor ((at least eighty-four 35 36 days prior to the election date)) no later than the Friday immediately 37 before the first day of regular candidate filing. A resolution calling 1 for a special election on a date set forth in subsection (2)(e) of this 2 section must be presented to the county auditor no later than the day 3 of the primary.

(4) In addition to the dates set forth in subsection (2)(a) through
(((d))) (e) of this section, a special election to validate an excess
levy or bond issue may be called at any time to meet the needs
resulting from fire, flood, earthquake, or other act of God. Such
county special election shall be noticed and conducted in the manner
provided by law.

(5) This section shall supersede the provisions of any and all 10 11 other statutes, whether general or special in nature, having different dates for such city, town, and district elections, the purpose of this 12 section being to establish mandatory dates for holding elections 13 ((except-for-those-elections-held-pursuant-to-a-home-rule-charter 14 adopted under Article XI, section 4 of the state Constitution)). 15 This 16 section shall not be construed as fixing the time for holding primary 17 elections, or elections for the recall of any elective public officer.

18 Sec. 4. RCW 29A.04.330 and 2009 c 413 s 4, 2009 c 144 s 3, and 19 2009 c 413 s 3 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

(1) All city, town, and district general elections shall be held
 throughout the state of Washington on the first Tuesday following the
 first Monday in November in the odd-numbered years.

23 This section shall not apply to:

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(a) Elections for the recall of any elective public officer;

(b) Public utility districts, conservation districts, or district elections at which the ownership of property within those districts is a prerequisite to voting, all of which elections shall be held at the times prescribed in the laws specifically applicable thereto;

(c) Consolidation proposals as provided for in RCW 28A.315.235 and nonhigh capital fund aid proposals as provided for in chapter 28A.540 RCW; and

32 (d) Special flood control districts consisting of three or more33 counties.

34 (2) The county auditor, as ex officio supervisor of elections, upon
35 request in the form of a resolution of the governing body of a city,
36 town, or district, presented to the auditor prior to the proposed
37 election date, may call a special election in such city, town, or

1 district, and for the purpose of such special election he or she may 2 combine, unite, or divide precincts. Such a special election shall be

3 held on one of the following dates as decided by the governing body:

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(b) The third Tuesday in April until January 1, 2013;

(a) The second Tuesday in February;

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(c) The fourth Tuesday in April on or after January 1, 2013;

7 (((-))) (d) The day of the primary election as specified by RCW 8 29A.04.311; or

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((<del>(d)</del>)) <u>(e)</u> The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

(3) A resolution calling for a special election on a date set forth 10 in subsection (2)(a) ((and (b))) through (c) of this section must be 11 presented to the county auditor at least ((forty five)) forty-six days 12 prior to the election date. A resolution calling for a special 13 election on a date set forth in subsection (2)(((c) or)) (d) of this 14 section must be presented to the county auditor ((at least eighty-four 15 days prior to the election date)) no later than the Friday immediately 16 17 before the first day of regular candidate filing. A resolution calling for a special election on a date set forth in subsection (2)(e) of this 18 section must be presented to the county auditor no later than the day 19 20 of the primary.

21 (4) In addition to subsection (2)(a) through  $\left(\left(\frac{d}{d}\right)\right)$  (e) of this 22 section, a special election to validate an excess levy or bond issue 23 may be called at any time to meet the needs resulting from fire, flood, 24 earthquake, or other act of God, except that no special election may be 25 held between the first day for candidates to file for public office and the last day to certify the returns of the general election other than 26 27 as provided in subsection (2)(((c) and)) (d) and (e) of this section. Such special election shall be conducted and notice thereof given in 28 29 the manner provided by law.

30 (5) This section shall supersede the provisions of any and all 31 other statutes, whether general or special in nature, having different 32 dates for such city, town, and district elections, the purpose of this 33 section being to establish mandatory dates for holding elections.

34 **Sec. 5.** RCW 29A.16.040 and 2004 c 266 s 10 are each amended to 35 read as follows:

The county legislative authority of each county in the state hereafter formed shall, at their first session, divide their respective 1 counties into election precincts and establish the boundaries of the 2 precincts. The county auditor shall thereupon designate the voting 3 place for each such precinct or whether the precinct is a vote by mail 4 precinct.

5 (1) Precinct boundaries may be altered at any time as long as 6 sufficient time exists prior to a given election for the necessary 7 procedural steps to be honored. Except as permitted under subsection 8 (5) of this section, no precinct ((boundaries)) changes may be 9 ((changed)) made during the period starting ((on-the-thirtieth)) 10 fourteen days prior to the first day for candidates to file for the 11 primary election and ending with the day of the general election.

12 (2) The county legislative authority may establish by ordinance a 13 limitation on the maximum number of active registered voters in each 14 precinct within its jurisdiction. The limitation may be different for 15 precincts based upon the method of voting used for such precincts and 16 the number may be less than the number established by law, but in no 17 case may the number exceed that authorized by law.

18 (3) Precincts in which voting machines or electronic voting devices 19 are used may contain as many as nine hundred active registered voters. 20 The number of poll-site ballot counting devices at each polling place 21 is at the discretion of the auditor. The number of devices must be 22 adequate to meet the expected voter turnout.

(4) On petition of twenty-five or more voters resident more than
ten miles from any polling site, the county legislative authority shall
establish a separate voting precinct therefor.

(5) The county auditor shall temporarily adjust precinct boundaries 26 27 when a city or town annexes unincorporated territory to the city or town, or whenever unincorporated territory is incorporated as a city or 28 The adjustment must be made as soon as possible after the 29 town. approval of the annexation or incorporation. The temporary adjustment 30 must be limited to the minimum changes necessary to accommodate the 31 32 addition of the territory to the city or town, or to establish the eligible voters within the boundaries of the new city or town, and 33 remains in effect only until precinct boundary modifications reflecting 34 the annexation or incorporation are adopted by the county legislative 35 authority. 36

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(6) In determining the number of active registered voters for the

1 purposes of this section, persons who are ongoing absentee voters under

2 RCW 29A.40.040 shall not be counted. Nothing in this subsection may be

3 construed as altering the vote tallying requirements of RCW 29A.60.230.

4 Sec. 6. RCW 29A.24.040 and 2006 c 344 s 5 are each amended to read 5 as follows:

A candidate may file his or her declaration of candidacy for an office by electronic means on a system specifically designed and authorized by a filing officer to accept filings.

9 (1) Filings that are received electronically must capture all 10 information specified in RCW 29A.24.031 (1) through (4).

(2) Electronic filing may begin at 9:00 a.m. the first ((Monday in June)) <u>day of the filing period</u> and continue through 4:00 p.m. the ((following Friday)) <u>last day of the filing period</u>.

14 (((3)-In-case-of-special-filing-periods-established-in-this 15 chapter, electronic filings may be accepted beginning at 9:00 a.m. on 16 the first day of the special filing period through 4:00 p.m. the last 17 day of the special filing period.))

18 Sec. 7. RCW 29A.24.050 and 2006 c 344 s 6 are each amended to read 19 as follows:

Except where otherwise provided by this title, declarations of candidacy for the following offices shall be filed during regular business hours with the filing officer ((no-earlier-than-the-first Monday in June)) beginning the Monday two weeks before Memorial day and ((no later than)) ending the following Friday in the year in which the office is scheduled to be voted upon:

(1) Offices that are scheduled to be voted upon for full terms or
both full terms and short terms at, or in conjunction with, a state
general election; and

(2) Offices where a vacancy, other than a short term, exists that has not been filled by election and for which an election to fill the vacancy is required in conjunction with the next state general election.

33 This section supersedes all other statutes that provide for a 34 different filing period for these offices. 1 **Sec. 8.** RCW 29A.24.131 and 2004 c 271 s 115 are each amended to 2 read as follows:

3 A candidate may withdraw his or her declaration of candidacy at any time before the close of business on the ((Thursday)) Monday following 4 5 the last day for candidates to file under RCW 29A.24.050 by filing, with the officer with whom the declaration of candidacy was filed, a 6 7 signed request that his or her name not be printed on the ballot. There shall be no withdrawal period for declarations of candidacy filed 8 9 during special filing periods held under this title. ((The-filing 10 officer-may-permit-the-withdrawal-of-a-filing-for-the-office-of precinct committee officer at the request of the candidate at any time 11 12 if no absentee ballots have been issued for that office and the ballots 13 for that precinct have not been printed. The filing officer may permit 14 the withdrawal of a filing for any elected office of a city, town, or special district at the request of the candidate at any time before a 15 16 primary if the primary ballots for that city, town, or special district 17 have-not-been-ordered.)) No filing fee may be refunded to any candidate who withdraws under this section. Notice of the deadline for 18 withdrawal of candidacy and that the filing fee is not refundable shall 19 be given to each candidate at the time he or she files. 20

21 Sec. 9. RCW 29A.24.141 and 2004 c 271 s 162 are each amended to 22 read as follows:

A void in candidacy ((for a nonpartisan office)) occurs when an election ((for such office, except for the short term,)) has been scheduled and no valid declaration of candidacy has been filed for the position or all persons filing such valid declarations of candidacy have died or been disqualified.

28 **Sec. 10.** RCW 29A.24.171 and 2006 c 344 s 7 are each amended to 29 read as follows:

30 ((Filings for a nonpartisan office shall be reopened for a period 31 of three normal business days, such three day period to be fixed by the 32 election officer with whom such declarations of candidacy are filed and 33 notice thereof given by notifying press, radio, and television in the 34 county and by such other means as may now or hereafter be provided by 35 law whenever before the eleventh Tuesday prior to a primary: 36 (1) A void in candidacy occurs;

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- 1 (2) A vacancy occurs in any nonpartisan office leaving an unexpired
  2 term to be filled by an election for which filings have not been held;
  3 or
- 4 (3)-A-nominee-for-judge-of-the-superior-court-entitled-to-a
  5 certificate of election pursuant to Article 4, section 29, Amendment 41
  6 of the state Constitution, dies or is disqualified.

7 Candidacies validly filed within said three day period shall appear 8 on the ballot as if made during the earlier filing period.)) If, prior to the first day of the regular filing period, a vacancy occurs in an 9 office that is not scheduled to appear on the general election ballot, 10 11 leaving an unexpired term for which a successor must be elected at the next general election, filings for that office shall be accepted during 12 the regular filing period. The filing officer shall provide notice of 13 the vacancy and filing period to newspapers, radio, and television in 14 the county, and online. The position shall appear on the primary and 15 general\_election\_ballots\_unless\_no\_primary\_is\_required\_or\_unless\_a 16 candidate for superior court judge is entitled to a certificate of 17 election pursuant to Article 4, section 29 of the state Constitution. 18

19 Sec. 11. RCW 29A.24.181 and 2006 c 344 s 8 are each amended to 20 read as follows:

21 ((Filings for a nonpartisan office (other than judge of the supreme 22 court or superintendent of public instruction))) If, prior to the day 23 of the primary, any of the following occur, filings shall be reopened for a period of three normal business days, such three-day period to be 24 fixed by the ((election-officer-with-whom-such-declarations-of 25 26 candidacy are filed and notice thereof given by notifying press, radio, 27 and television in the county and by such other means as may now or hereafter be provided by law, when)) filing officer: 28

(1) A void in candidacy ((for such nonpartisan office)) occurs ((on or-after-the-eleventh-Tuesday-prior-to-a-primary-but-prior-to-the eleventh-Tuesday-before-an-election)) following\_the\_regular\_filing period\_and\_deadline\_to\_withdraw; or

33 (2) ((A nominee for judge of the superior court eligible after a 34 contested primary for a certificate of election by Article 4, section 35 29, Amendment 41 of the state Constitution, dies or is disqualified 36 within the ten day period immediately following the last day allotted 37 for a candidate to withdraw; or 1 (3)-A-vacancy-occurs-in-any-nonpartisan-office-on-or-after-the 2 eleventh Tuesday prior to a primary but prior to the eleventh-Tuesday 3 before-an-election-leaving-an-unexpired-term-to-be-filled-by-an 4 election for which filings have not been held.)) A vacancy occurs in an 5 office\_for\_which\_filings\_have\_not\_already\_been\_held,\_leaving\_an 6 unexpired\_term\_for\_which\_a\_successor\_must\_be\_elected\_at\_the\_next 7 general election.

8 The filing officer shall provide notice of the vacancy and filing 9 period to newspapers, radio, and television in the county, and online. 10 The position shall appear on the general election ballots unless a 11 candidate for superior court judge is entitled to a certificate of 12 election pursuant to Article 4, section 29 of the state Constitution.

The candidate receiving a plurality of the votes cast for that office in the general election shall be deemed elected. <u>This section</u> <u>does\_not\_apply\_to\_voids\_in\_candidacy\_in\_the\_office\_of\_precinct</u> <u>committee\_officer, which\_are\_filled\_by\_appointment\_pursuant\_to\_RCW</u> <u>29A.28.071.</u>

18 Sec. 12. RCW 29A.24.191 and 2006 c 344 s 9 are each amended to 19 read as follows:

A scheduled election shall be lapsed, the office deemed stricken from the ballot, no purported write-in votes counted, and no candidate certified as elected, when((÷

23 (1) In an election for judge of the supreme court or superintendent 24 of-public-instruction, -a-void-in-candidacy-occurs-on-or-after-the 25 eleventh-Tuesday prior-to-a-primary, public-filings-and-the-primary 26 being an indispensable phase of the election process for such offices;

27 (2) Except as otherwise specified in RCW 29A.24.181, a nominee for 38 judge-of-the-superior-court-entitled-to-a-certificate-of-election 30 pursuant-to-Article-4,-section-29,-Amendment-41-of-the-state 30 Constitution dies or is disqualified-on or after the eleventh Tuesday 31 prior to a primary;

32 (3) In other elections for nonpartisan office)) a void in candidacy 33 occurs ((or a vacancy occurs involving an unexpired term to be filled 34 on or after the eleventh Tuesday prior to an election)) following the 35 special three day filing period required by RCW 29A.24.181. 1 Sec. 13. RCW 29A.24.311 and 2004 c 271 s 117 are each amended to 2 read as follows:

Any person who desires to be a write-in candidate and have such 3 votes counted at a primary or election may file a declaration of 4 5 candidacy with the officer designated in RCW 29A.24.070 not later than the day ((before-the-primary-or-election)) ballots must be mailed 6 7 according to RCW 29A.40.070. Declarations of candidacy for write-in candidates must be accompanied by a filing fee in the same manner as 8 9 required of other candidates filing for the office as provided in RCW 10 29A.24.091.

Votes cast for write-in candidates who have filed such declarations 11 of candidacy and write-in votes for persons appointed by major 12 political parties pursuant to RCW 29A.28.021 need only specify the name 13 of the candidate in the appropriate location on the ballot in order to 14 be counted. Write-in votes cast for any other candidate, in order to 15 be counted, must designate the office sought and position number or 16 17 political party, if the manner in which the write-in is done does not make the office or position clear. 18

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No person may file as a write-in candidate where:

(1) At a general election, the person attempting to file either filed as a write-in candidate for the same office at the preceding primary or the person's name appeared on the ballot for the same office at the preceding primary;

(2) The person attempting to file as a write-in candidate has
already filed a valid write-in declaration for that primary or
election, unless one or the other of the two filings is for the office
of precinct committeeperson;

(3) The name of the person attempting to file already appears on
the ballot as a candidate for another office, unless one of the two
offices for which he or she is a candidate is precinct committeeperson.

31 The declaration of candidacy shall be similar to that required by 32 RCW 29A.24.031. No write-in candidate filing under this section may be included in any voter's pamphlet produced under chapter 29A.32 RCW 33 unless that candidate qualifies to have his or her name printed on the 34 general election ballot. The legislative authority of any jurisdiction 35 producing a local voter's pamphlet under chapter 29A.32 RCW may 36 37 provide, by ordinance, for the inclusion of write-in candidates in such 38 pamphlets.

1 Sec. 14. RCW 29A.28.041 and 2006 c 344 s 12 are each amended to 2 read as follows:

3 (1) Whenever a vacancy occurs in the United States house of 4 representatives or the United States senate from this state, the 5 governor shall order a special election to fill the vacancy. Minor 6 political party candidates and independent candidates may be nominated 7 through the convention procedures provided in chapter 29A.20 RCW.

(2) Within ten days of such vacancy occurring, he or she shall 8 issue a writ of election fixing a date for the ((special-vacancy 9 election-not-less-than-ninety-days-after-the-issuance-of-the-writ, 10 fixing-a-date-for-the-primary-for-nominating-major-political-party 11 12 candidates for the special vacancy election not less than thirty days 13 before the day fixed for holding the special vacancy election, fixing 14 the dates for the special filing period, and designating the term or part-of-the-term-for-which-the-vacancy-exists)) primary\_at\_least 15 seventy days after issuance of the writ, and fixing a date for the 16 election at least seventy days after the date of the primary. 17 If the vacancy is in the office of United States representative, the writ of 18 election shall specify the congressional district that is vacant. 19

(3) If the vacancy occurs less than ((six)) eight months before a state general election and before the ((second Friday following the)) close of the filing period for that general election, the special primary, special vacancy election, and minor party and independent candidate nominating conventions must be held in concert with the state primary and state general election in that year.

26 (4) If the vacancy occurs on or after the first day for filing 27 under RCW 29A.24.050 and on or before the ((second Friday following the)) close of the filing period, a special filing period of three 28 normal business days shall be fixed by the governor and notice thereof 29 given to all media, including press, radio, and television within the 30 area in which the vacancy election is to be held, to the end that, 31 32 insofar as possible, all interested persons will be aware of such filing period. ((The last day of the filing period shall not be later 33 34 than-the-sixth-Tuesday-before-the-primary-at-which-major-political 35 party candidates are to be nominated.)) The names of major political 36 party candidates who have filed valid declarations of candidacy during 37 this three-day period shall appear on the approaching primary ballot.

The requirements of RCW 29A.20.131 do not apply to a minor political
 party or independent candidate convention held under this subsection.

(5) If the vacancy occurs later than the ((second Friday following the)) close of the filing period, a special primary((, special)) and vacancy election((, and the minor party and independent candidate conventions)) to fill the position shall be held after the next state general election but, in any event, no later than the ninetieth day following the November election.

9 Sec. 15. RCW 29A.36.010 and 2005 c 2 s 12 are each reenacted and 10 amended to read as follows:

11 ((On-or-before-the-day-following-the-last-day-allowed-for 12 candidates-to-withdraw-under-RCW-29A.24.130)) Not\_later\_than\_the Tuesday following the regular filing period, the secretary of state 13 shall certify to each county auditor a list of the candidates who have 14 filed declarations of candidacy in his or her office for the primary. 15 16 For each office, the certificate shall include the name of each candidate, his or her address, and his or her party preference or 17 independent designation as shown on filed declarations. 18

19 Sec. 16. RCW 29A.40.070 and 2006 c 344 s 13 are each amended to 20 read as follows:

21 (1) Except where a recount or litigation ((under RCW 29A.68.011)) 22 is pending, the county auditor ((shall have sufficient absentee ballots 23 available-for-absentee-voters-of-that-county,-other-than-overseas 24 voters and service voters, at least twenty days before any primary, 25 general election, or special election. The county auditor)) must mail ((absentee)) ballots to each voter ((for whom the county auditor has 26 received a request nineteen days before the primary or election)) at 27 least eighteen days before ((the)) each primary or election, and as 28 soon as possible for all subsequent registration changes. ((For-a 29 30 request for an absentee ballot received after the nineteenth day before the primary or election, the county auditor shall make every effort to 31 32 mail ballots within one business day, and shall mail the ballots within 33 two business days)).

34 (2) ((At least thirty days before any primary, general election, or
 35 special election, the county auditor shall mail ballots to all overseas
 36 and service voters.)) Except where a recount or litigation is pending,

the county auditor must mail ballots to each service and overseas voter at least thirty days before each special election and at least forty-five days before each primary or general election. A request for a ballot made by an overseas or service voter after that day must be processed immediately.

6 (3) <u>A registered voter may obtain a replacement ballot if the</u>
7 <u>ballot is destroyed, spoiled, lost, or not received by the voter. The</u>
8 <u>voter may obtain the ballot by telephone request, by mail,</u>
9 <u>electronically, or in person. The county auditor shall keep a record</u>
10 <u>of each request for a replacement ballot.</u>

11 (4) Each county auditor shall certify to the office of the 12 secretary of state the dates the ballots ((prescribed in subsection (1) 13 of this section were available and)) were mailed, or the reason and 14 date the ballots will be mailed if the ballots were not mailed timely.

15 (((4)-If-absentee-ballots-will-not-be-available-or-mailed-as prescribed in subsection (1) of this section, the county auditor shall immediately-certify-to-the-office-of-the-secretary-of-state-when absentee-ballots-will-be-available-and-mailed. Copies-of-this certification-must-be-provided-to-the-county-canvassing-board,-the press, jurisdictions with issues on the ballot in the election, and any candidates.

2.2 (5) If absentee ballots were not available or mailed as prescribed in subsection (1) of this section, for a reason other than a recount or 23 24 litigation, the county auditor, in consultation with the certification 25 and training program of the office of the secretary of state, shall submit a report to the office of the secretary of state outlining why 26 27 the deadline was missed and what corrective actions will be taken in future-elections-to-ensure-that-absentee-ballots-are-available-and 28 mailed as prescribed in subsection (1) of this section. 29

30 (6)) Failure to ((have-absentee-ballots-available-and-mailed))
31 <u>mail ballots</u> as prescribed in ((subsection (1) of)) this section does
32 not by itself provide a basis for an election contest or other legal
33 challenge to the results of a primary, general election, or special
34 election.

35 **Sec. 17.** RCW 29A.40.091 and 2010 c 125 s 1 are each amended to 36 read as follows:

37 (1) The county auditor shall send each voter a ballot, a security

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envelope in which to seal the ballot after voting, a larger envelope in which to return the security envelope, <u>a declaration that the voter</u> <u>must\_sign</u>, and instructions on <u>how\_to\_obtain\_information\_about\_the</u> <u>election</u>, how to mark the ballot, and how to return ((<del>it</del>)) <u>the ballot</u> to the county auditor.

(2) The ((instructions-that-accompany-a-ballot-for-a-partisan б 7 primary-must-include-instructions-for-voting-the-applicable-ballot style, as provided in chapter 29A.36 RCW. The voter's name and address 8 must be printed on the larger return envelope, which must also contain 9 a-declaration-by-the-voter-reciting-his-or-her-gualifications-and 10 stating that he or she)) voter must swear under penalty of perjury that 11 he or she meets the gualifications to vote, and has not voted in any 12 13 other jurisdiction at this election((, together with a summary of the penalties for any violation of any of the provisions of this chapter)). 14 15 The declaration must clearly inform the voter that it is illegal to vote if he or she is not a United States citizen; it is illegal to vote 16 if he or she has been convicted of a felony and has not had his or her 17 voting rights restored; and((, except as otherwise provided by law,)) 18 it is illegal to cast a ballot or sign a return envelope on behalf of 19 another voter. The ((return-envelope-must-provide-space-for-the)) 20 21 voter ((to)) must indicate the date on which the ballot was voted and 22 ((for the voter to)) sign the ((oath)) declaration. ((It)) The ballot materials must also contain a space so that the voter may include a 23 24 telephone number. ((A summary of the applicable penalty provisions of 25 this-chapter-must-be-printed-on-the-return-envelope-immediately 26 adjacent to the space for the voter's signature. The signature of the 27 voter on the return envelope must affirm and attest to the statements regarding the qualifications of that voter and to the validity of the 28 29 ballot. The return envelope may provide secrecy for the voter's 30 signature and optional telephone number.))

31 (3) For overseas and service voters, the signed declaration on the 32 return envelope constitutes the equivalent of a voter registration for 33 the election or primary for which the ballot has been issued. <u>Return</u> 34 <u>envelopes for overseas and service voters must enable the ballot to be</u> 35 <u>returned postage free if mailed through the United States postal</u> 36 <u>service, United States armed forces postal service, or the postal</u> 37 <u>service of a United States foreign embassy under 39 U.S.C. 3406.</u>

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1 <u>(4)</u> The voter must be instructed to either return the ballot to the 2 county auditor ((by whom it was issued)) no later than 8:00 p.m. the 3 <u>day of the election or primary</u>, or ((attach-sufficient-first-class 4 postage, if applicable, and)) mail the ballot to the ((appropriate)) 5 county auditor with a postmark no later than the day of the election or 6 primary ((for which the ballot was issued.

7 If the county auditor chooses to forward ballots, he or she must include-with-the-ballot-a-clear-explanation-of-the-qualifications 8 9 necessary to vote in that election and must also advise a voter with 10 questions about his or her eligibility to contact the county auditor. This explanation may be provided on the ballot envelope, on an enclosed 11 insert, or printed directly on the ballot itself. If the information 12 13 is not included, the envelope must clearly indicate that the ballot is 14 not-to-be-forwarded-and-that-return-postage-is-guaranteed)). For overseas and service voters, the declaration must also explain that a 15 voter may fax or e-mail a voted ballot and the signed declaration if 16 17 the voter agrees to waive secrecy.

18 Sec. 18. RCW 29A.40.110 and 2009 c 369 s 40 are each amended to 19 read as follows:

(1) The opening and subsequent processing of return envelopes for
any primary or election may begin upon receipt. The tabulation of
absentee ballots must not commence until after 8:00 p.m. on the day of
the primary or election.

24 (2) All received ((absentee)) return envelopes must be placed in secure locations from the time of delivery to the county auditor until 25 26 their subsequent opening. After opening the return envelopes, the county canvassing board shall place all of the ballots in secure 27 28 storage until ((after 8:00 p.m. of the day of the primary or election)) ((Absentee-ballots-that-are-to-be-tabulated-on-an 29 processing. 30 electronic vote tallying system)) Ballots may be taken from the inner 31 envelopes and all the normal procedural steps may be performed to prepare these ballots for tabulation. 32

(3) ((Before opening a returned absentee ballot,)) The canvassing board, or its designated representatives, shall examine the postmark((7 statement,)) on the return envelope and signature on the ((return envelope-that-contains-the-security-envelope-and-absentee-ballot)) declaration before processing the ballot. The ballot must either be

received no later than 8:00 p.m. on the day of the primary or election, 1 2 or must be postmarked no later than the day of the primary or election. All personnel assigned to verify signatures must receive training on 3 statewide standards for signature verification. Personnel shall verify 4 5 that the voter's signature on the ((return - envelope)) <u>ballot</u> declaration is the same as the signature of that voter in the 6 7 registration files of the county. Verification may be conducted by an automated verification system approved by the secretary of state. 8 ((For any absentee ballot,)) A variation between the signature of the 9 10 voter on the ((return envelope)) ballot declaration and the signature of that voter in the registration files due to the substitution of 11 12 initials or the use of common nicknames is permitted so long as the 13 surname and handwriting are clearly the same.

14 (4) ((For-registered-voters-casting-absentee-ballots)) If the postmark is missing or illegible, the date on the ((return envelope)) 15 ballot declaration to which the voter has attested determines the 16 17 validity, as to the time of voting, for that ((absentee)) ballot ((if the postmark is missing or is illegible)). For overseas voters and 18 service voters, the date on the ((return-envelope)) declaration to 19 which the voter has attested determines the validity, as to the time of 20 21 voting, for that ((absentee)) ballot. Any overseas voter or service 22 voter who agrees to waive secrecy may return the signed declaration and voted ballot by fax or e-mail by 8:00 p.m. on the day of the primary or 23 24 election.

25 **Sec. 19.** RCW 29A.56.030 and 2006 c 344 s 15 are each amended to 26 read as follows:

The name of any candidate for a major political party nomination for president of the United States shall be printed on the presidential preference primary ballot of a major political party only:

30 (1) By direction of the secretary of state, who in the secretary's
31 sole discretion has determined that the candidate's candidacy is
32 generally advocated or is recognized in national news media; or

33 (2) If members of the political party of the candidate have 34 presented a petition for nomination of the candidate that has attached 35 to the petition a sheet or sheets containing the signatures of at least 36 one thousand registered voters who declare themselves in the petition 37 as being affiliated with the same political party as the presidential candidate. The petition shall be filed with the secretary of state not later than ((sixty)) seventy-five days before the presidential preference primary. The signature sheets shall also contain the residence address and name or number of the precinct of each registered voter whose signature appears thereon and shall be certified in the manner prescribed in RCW 29A.72.230 and 29A.72.240.

7 The secretary of state shall place the name of the candidate on the ballot unless the candidate, at least ((fifty-two)) sixty-seven days 8 9 before the presidential preference primary, executes and files with the 10 secretary of state an affidavit stating without qualification that he or she is not now and will not become a candidate for the office of 11 president of the United States at the forthcoming presidential 12 13 election. The secretary of state shall certify the names of all 14 candidates who will appear on the presidential preference primary ballot to the respective county auditors on or before the fourth 15 Tuesday in April of each presidential election year. 16

17 **Sec. 20.** RCW 29A.60.190 and 2006 c 344 s 16 are each amended to 18 read as follows:

(1) Except as provided by subsection  $\left(\left(\frac{3}{2}\right)\right)$  (2) of this section, 19 20 ((fifteen)) fourteen days after a primary or special election and 21 twenty-one days after a general election, the county canvassing board shall complete the canvass and certify the results. 22 The county 23 canvassing board must complete the canvass and certify the results of the April 17, 2012, special election ten days after election day. Each 24 ((absentee)) ballot that was returned before ((the-closing-of-the 25 26 polls)) 8:00 p.m. on the day of the special election, general election, or primary, and each ((absentee)) ballot bearing a postmark on or 27 before the date of the ((primary-or)) special election, general 28 election, or primary and received ((on or before the date on which the 29 primary-or-election-is-certified)) no\_later\_than\_the\_day\_before 30 31 certification, must be included in the canvass report.

32 (2) ((At-the-request-of-a-caucus-of-the-state-legislature,-the 33 county auditor shall transmit copies of all unofficial returns of state 34 and legislative primaries or elections prepared by or for the county 35 canvassing-board to-either the secretary of the senate or the chief 36 clerk of the house of representatives. 1 (3)) On or before the thirtieth day after an election conducted 2 under the instant runoff voting method for the pilot project authorized 3 by RCW 29A.53.020, the canvassing board shall complete the canvass and 4 certify the results.

5 **Sec. 21.** RCW 29A.60.190 and 2006 c 344 s 17 are each amended to 6 read as follows:

7 (((1) Fifteen)) Fourteen days after a primary or special election 8 and twenty-one days after a general election, the county canvassing board shall complete the canvass and certify the results. 9 Each 10 ((absentee)) ballot that was returned before ((the-closing-of-the polls)) 8:00 p.m. on the day of the special election, general election, 11 or primary, and each ((absentee)) ballot bearing a postmark on or 12 before the date of the ((primary-or)) special election, general 13 election, or primary and received ((on or before the date on which the 14 15 primary-or-election-is-certified)) no\_later\_than\_the\_day\_before 16 certification, must be included in the canvass report.

17 (((2)-At-the-request-of-a-caucus-of-the-state-legislature,-the 18 county auditor shall transmit copies of all unofficial returns of state 19 and legislative primaries or elections prepared by or for the county 20 canvassing-board-to-either-the-secretary-of-the-senate-or-the-chief 21 clerk of the house of representatives.))

22 **Sec. 22.** RCW 29A.60.240 and 2003 c 111 s 1524 are each amended to 23 read as follows:

The secretary of state shall, as soon as possible but in any event 24 25 not later than ((the-third-Tuesday)) seventeen\_days following the primary, canvass and certify the returns of all primary elections as to 26 state offices, United 27 candidates for States senators and representatives in Congress, and all other candidates whose district 28 29 extends beyond the limits of a single county.

30 Sec. 23. RCW 29A.64.011 and 2004 c 271 s 177 are each amended to 31 read as follows:

An officer of a political party or any person for whom votes were cast in a primary who ((was not declared nominated)) did not qualify for the general election may file a written application for a recount

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1 of the votes or a portion of the votes cast at that primary for all 2 persons for whom votes were cast for ((nomination to)) that office.

An officer of a political party or any person for whom votes were cast at any election may file a written application for a recount of the votes or a portion of the votes cast at that election for all candidates for election to that office.

7 Any group of five or more registered voters may file a written 8 application for a recount of the votes or a portion of the votes cast 9 upon any question or issue. They shall designate one of the members of 10 the group as chair and shall indicate the voting residence of each 11 member of the group.

12 An application for a recount of the votes cast for an office or on 13 a ballot measure must be filed with the officer with whom filings are 14 made for the jurisdiction.

15 An application for a recount must specify whether the recount will 16 be done manually or by the vote tally system. A recount done by the 17 vote tally system must use programming that recounts and reports only 18 the office or ballot measure in question. The county shall also 19 provide for a test of the logic and accuracy of that program.

An application for a recount must be filed within ((three)) two business days after the county canvassing board or secretary of state has declared the official results of the primary or election for the office or issue for which the recount is requested.

This chapter applies to the recounting of votes cast by paper ballots and to the recounting of votes recorded on ballots counted by a vote tally system.

27 **Sec. 24.** RCW 29A.64.030 and 2005 c 243 s 20 are each amended to 28 read as follows:

An application for a recount shall state the office for which a 29 30 recount is requested and whether the request is for all or only a 31 portion of the votes cast in that jurisdiction of that office. The person filing an application for a manual recount shall, at the same 32 time, deposit with the county canvassing board or secretary of state, 33 in cash or by certified check, a sum equal to twenty-five cents for 34 each ballot cast in the jurisdiction or portion of the jurisdiction for 35 36 which the recount is requested as security for the payment of any costs 37 of conducting the recount. If the application is for a machine recount, the deposit must be equal to fifteen cents for each ballot.
 These charges shall be determined by the county canvassing board or
 boards under RCW 29A.64.081.

The county canvassing board shall determine the date, time, and 4 place or places at which the recount will be conducted. Not less than 5 ((two days)) one day before the date of the recount, the county auditor 6 7 shall ((mail a notice of the time and place of the recount to)) notify the applicant or affected parties and, if the recount involves an 8 9 office, to any person for whom votes were cast for that office of the date, time, and place of the recount. ((The county auditor shall also 10 notify the affected parties by either telephone, fax, e-mail, or other 11 12 electronic means at the time of mailing. At least three attempts must 13 be made over a two-day period to notify the affected parties or until 14 the affected parties have received the notification. Each attempt to notify affected parties must request a return response indicating that 15 16 the notice has been received.)) Each person entitled to receive notice 17 of the recount may attend, witness the recount, and be accompanied by counsel. 18

Proceedings of the canvassing board are public under chapter 42.30 RCW. Subject to reasonable and equitable guidelines adopted by the canvassing board, all interested persons may attend and witness a recount.

23 **Sec. 25.** RCW 29A.68.011 and 2007 c 374 s 3 are each amended to 24 read as follows:

Any justice of the supreme court, judge of the court of appeals, or 25 26 judge of the superior court in the proper county shall, by order, require any person charged with error, wrongful act, or neglect to 27 forthwith correct the error, desist from the wrongful act, or perform 28 the duty and to do as the court orders or to show cause forthwith why 29 30 the error should not be corrected, the wrongful act desisted from, or 31 the duty or order not performed, whenever it is made to appear to such justice or judge by affidavit of an elector that: 32

(1) An error or omission has occurred or is about to occur inprinting the name of any candidate on official ballots; or

(2) An error other than as provided in subsections (1) and (3) of
 this section has been committed or is about to be committed in printing
 the ballots; or

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(3) The name of any person has been or is about to be wrongfully
 placed upon the ballots; or

3 (4) A wrongful act other than as provided for in subsections (1)
4 and (3) of this section has been performed or is about to be performed
5 by any election officer; or

6 (5) Any neglect of duty on the part of an election officer other 7 than as provided for in subsections (1) and (3) of this section has 8 occurred or is about to occur; or

9 (6) An error or omission has occurred or is about to occur in the 10 official certification of the election.

An affidavit of an elector under subsections (1) and (3) of this 11 section when relating to a primary election must be filed with the 12 appropriate court no later than ((the-second-Friday)) two\_days 13 following the closing of the filing period ((for nominations)) for such 14 office and shall be heard and finally disposed of by the court not 15 16 later than five days after the filing thereof. An affidavit of an 17 elector under subsections (1) and (3) of this section when relating to a general election must be filed with the appropriate court no later 18 than three days following the official certification of the primary 19 election returns and shall be heard and finally disposed of by the 20 court not later than five days after the filing thereof. An affidavit 21 22 of an elector under subsection (6) of this section shall be filed with 23 the appropriate court no later than ten days following the official certification of the election as provided in RCW 24 29A.60.190, 25 29A.60.240, or 29A.60.250 or, in the case of a recount, ten days after 26 the official certification of the amended abstract as provided in RCW 27 29A.64.061.

28 **Sec. 26.** RCW 29A.76.010 and 2003 c 111 s 1901 are each amended to 29 read as follows:

(1) It is the responsibility of each county, municipal corporation, and special purpose district with a governing body comprised of internal director, council, or commissioner districts not based on statutorily required land ownership criteria to periodically redistrict its governmental unit, based on population information from the most recent federal decennial census.

36 (2) Within forty-five days after receipt of federal decennial37 census information applicable to a specific local area, the commission

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established in RCW 44.05.030 shall forward the census information to each municipal corporation, county, and district charged with redistricting under this section.

4 (3) No later than eight months after its receipt of federal
5 decennial census data, the governing body of the municipal corporation,
6 county, or district shall prepare a plan for redistricting its internal
7 or director districts.

8

(4) The plan shall be consistent with the following criteria:

9 (a) Each internal director, council, or commissioner district shall 10 be as nearly equal in population as possible to each and every other 11 such district comprising the municipal corporation, county, or special 12 purpose district.

13

(b) Each district shall be as compact as possible.

14 (c) Each district shall consist of geographically contiguous area.

(d) Population data may not be used for purposes of favoring ordisfavoring any racial group or political party.

(e) To the extent feasible and if not inconsistent with the basic enabling legislation for the municipal corporation, county, or district, the district boundaries shall coincide with existing recognized natural boundaries and shall, to the extent possible, preserve existing communities of related and mutual interest.

(5) During the adoption of its plan, the municipal corporation, county, or district shall ensure that full and reasonable public notice of its actions is provided. The municipal corporation, county, or district shall hold at least one public hearing on the redistricting plan at least one week before adoption of the plan.

(6)(a) Any registered voter residing in an area affected by the 27 redistricting plan may request review of the adopted local plan by the 28 superior court of the county in which he or she resides, within 29 ((forty-five)) fifteen days of the plan's adoption. Any request for 30 31 review must specify the reason or reasons alleged why the local plan is 32 not consistent with the applicable redistricting criteria. The municipal corporation, county, or district may be joined as respondent. 33 The superior court shall thereupon review the challenged plan for 34 compliance with the applicable redistricting criteria set out in 35 subsection (4) of this section. 36

(b) If the superior court finds the plan to be consistent with therequirements of this section, the plan shall take effect immediately.

1 (c) If the superior court determines the plan does not meet the 2 requirements of this section, in whole or in part, it shall remand the 3 plan for further or corrective action within a specified and reasonable 4 time period.

5 (d) If the superior court finds that any request for review is 6 frivolous or has been filed solely for purposes of harassment or delay, 7 it may impose appropriate sanctions on the party requesting review, 8 including payment of attorneys' fees and costs to the respondent 9 municipal corporation, county, or district.

10 **Sec. 27.** RCW 42.12.070 and 1994 c 223 s 1 are each amended to read 11 as follows:

A vacancy on an elected nonpartisan governing body of a special purpose district where property ownership is not a qualification to vote, a town, or a city other than a first-class city or a charter code city, shall be filled as follows unless the provisions of law relating to the special district, town, or city provide otherwise:

(1) Where one position is vacant, the remaining members of the governing body shall appoint a qualified person to fill the vacant position.

20 (2) Where two or more positions are vacant and two or more members 21 of the governing body remain in office, the remaining members of the governing body shall appoint a qualified person to fill one of the 22 23 vacant positions, the remaining members of the governing body and the 24 newly appointed person shall appoint another qualified person to fill another vacant position, and so on until each of the vacant positions 25 26 is filled with each of the new appointees participating in each appointment that is made after his or her appointment. 27

(3) If less than two members of a governing body remain in office, the county legislative authority of the county in which all or the largest geographic portion of the city, town, or special district is located shall appoint a qualified person or persons to the governing body until the governing body has two members.

33 (4) If a governing body fails to appoint a qualified person to fill 34 a vacancy within ninety days of the occurrence of the vacancy, the 35 authority of the governing body to fill the vacancy shall cease and the 36 county legislative authority of the county in which all or the largest geographic portion of the city, town, or special district is located
 shall appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy.

(5) If the county legislative authority of the county fails to 3 appoint a qualified person within one hundred eighty days of the 4 5 occurrence of the vacancy, the county legislative authority or the remaining members of the governing body of the city, town, or special б 7 district may petition the governor to appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy. The governor may appoint a qualified person to fill 8 the vacancy after being petitioned if at the time the governor fills 9 10 the vacancy the county legislative authority has not appointed a qualified person to fill the vacancy. 11

12 (6) As provided in ((RCW 29.15.190 and 29.21.410)) chapter 29A.24 13 RCW, each person who is appointed shall serve until a qualified person 14 is elected at the next election at which a member of the governing body normally would be elected ((that occurs twenty-eight or more days after 15 the-occurrence-of-the-vacancy)). If needed, special filing periods 16 shall be authorized as provided in ((RCW-29.15.170-and-29.15.180))17 chapter 29A.24 RCW for qualified persons to file for the vacant office. 18 A primary shall be held to ((nominate)) qualify candidates if 19 sufficient time exists to hold a primary and more than two candidates 20 21 file for the vacant office. Otherwise, a primary shall not be held and 22 the person receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected. The person elected shall take office immediately and serve the 23 24 remainder of the unexpired term.

If an election for the position that became vacant would otherwise have been held at this general election date, only one election to fill the position shall be held and the person elected to fill the succeeding term for that position shall take office immediately when qualified as defined in RCW ((29.01.135)) 29A.04.133 and shall service both the remainder of the unexpired term and the succeeding term.

31 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 28. The following acts or parts of acts are 32 each repealed:

33 (1) RCW 29A.04.310 (Primaries) and 2005 c 2 s 8, 2003 c 111 s 143, 34 1977 ex.s. c 361 s 29, 1965 ex.s. c 103 s 6, & 1965 c 9 s 29.13.070; 35 (2) RCW 29A.24.151 (Notice of void in candidacy) and 2004 c 271 s 36 163; (3) RCW 29A.24.161 (Filings to fill void in candidacy--How made)
 and 2004 c 271 s 164;

3 (4) RCW 29A.24.210 (Vacancy in partisan elective office--Special 4 filing period) and 2005 c 2 s 10 & 2003 c 111 s 621;

5 (5) RCW 29A.24.211 (Vacancy in partisan elective office--Special 6 filing period) and 2006 c 344 s 10 & 2004 c 271 s 116;

7 (6) RCW 29A.36.011 (Certifying primary candidates) and 2004 c 271 8 s 124; and

9 (7) RCW 29A.40.150 (Overseas, service voters) and 2009 c 415 s 12,
10 2006 c 206 s 7, 2005 c 245 s 1, 2003 c 111 s 1015, 1993 c 417 s 7, 1987
11 c 346 s 19, & 1983 1st ex.s. c 71 s 8.

12 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 29. 2005 c 2 s 15 is repealed.

<u>NEW SECTION.</u> sec. 30. Section 21 of this act takes effect July 1,
2013.

15 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 31. Section 20 of this act expires July 1, 16 2013.

17 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 32. With the exception of sections 21 and 29 of 18 this act, this act takes effect January 1, 2012.

19 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> Sec. 33. Section 29 of this act is necessary for the 20 immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or 21 support of the state government and its existing public institutions, 22 and takes effect immediately.

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