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**HOUSE BILL 2529**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Kraft, Hudgins, and McBride

AN ACT Relating to the costs of election administration; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature shall convene an election costs task force to examine the costs related to the administration of all elections in the state. The task force shall include the following members:

(a) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate;

(b) One member from each of the two largest caucuses in the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(c) A representative from the office of the governor;

(d) A representative from the office of the secretary of state;

(e) A representative from the Washington state association of county auditors;

(f) A representative from the Washington state association of counties;

(g) A representative from the association of Washington cities;

(h) A representative for special purpose districts, appointed by the governor;

(i) A representative for conservation districts; and

(j) A member of the public at-large, appointed by the governor.

(2) The secretary of state, or his or her designee, shall set the date of the initial meeting of the task force and chair the initial meeting. The task force shall choose two cochairs from among its legislative members at the initial meeting. Additional meetings shall be set by the task force cochairs. All meetings of the task force must be scheduled and conducted in accordance with the requirements of both the senate and the house of representatives.

(3) The task force may request information, recordings, and other records from agencies as the task force deems appropriate for it to effectuate this section.

(4) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the office of the secretary of state.

(5) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

(6) The task force must collect data and closely analyze:

(a) The costs of election administration across the state;

(b) The variation of costs across counties;

(c) The impact of existing and future costs on voter participation in the state;

(d) The cost impact of various voter initiatives;

(e) The costs associated with ballot design and number of ballot measures;

(f) The different funding sources for state and local elections;

(g) The sustainability of funding sources for state and local elections;

(h) The planning for future costs and the ability to implement new state policy; and

(i) Other issues that the task force finds may impact or affect election costs.

(7) The task force must submit a report to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2018. The report must provide detailed findings with analysis on the data collected in each category, and include a comparative analysis of costs among counties, the allocation of costs among the state and local districts, and other factors that will present a full understanding of election costs and funding. The report must include recommendations for the stable and sustainable funding of election costs that will create and improve efficiencies in the election process that is equitable across the state. Recommendations also should include any cost savings, containment, and best practices for the efficient and secure administration of elections.

(8) This section expires June 30, 2019.

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