

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5650

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government & Elections, February 2, 2022

Title: An act relating to providing voters with information regarding elections law violations within the voters' pamphlet.

Brief Description: Providing voters with information regarding elections law violations within the voters' pamphlet.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, J., Fortunato and Wagoner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 1/28/22, 2/02/22 [DPS, DNP].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires that a statement specifying various acts which violate Washington State laws relating to voting and contact information for the Secretary of State's office to report suspected election law violations appear in the voters' pamphlet.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5650 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Hawkins.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Kuderer, Vice Chair; Hasegawa.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The Secretary of State (SOS) must print and distribute a voters' pamphlet to

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each household in the state, public libraries, and other locations the SOS deems appropriate whenever a statewide ballot measure or office is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot. The state voters' pamphlet must contain:

- information about advisory votes and ballot measures and arguments for their approval and rejection;
- statements from and photographs of candidates for statewide and judicial office;
- contact information for the Public Disclosure Commission;
- contact information for major political parties;
- a list of student engagement hubs; and
- any additional information deemed informative to voters by the SOS.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): The inside cover of the state voters' pamphlet must contain a statement that:

- informs that it is illegal to vote if a person is not a United States citizen, has been convicted of a felony had not had their voting rights restored, or to cast a ballot or sign a ballot declaration on behalf of another;
- lists certain violations by voters which are punishable by a felony; and
- provides contact information for the SOS to report suspected incidents of election law violations.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

The statement must list, rather than describe, certain violations by voters which are punishable by a felony.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This is a simple labeling bill. We need to remind voters that we respect our voting rights and there are consequences if you try to manipulate the process. It's easy for new voters to misunderstand what government expects of them when they receive a ballot in the mail, particularly when there are large cultural differences. This notice will help new voters not break the law.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jeff Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Kory Slaathaug.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.