

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2118

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations, February 20, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to election procedures.

**Brief Description:** Harmonizing various election procedures.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Representatives D. Schmidt, Scott, Blanton, Quall and Thompson).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations: 2/14/96, 2/20/96 [DPA, DNPA].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Goings, Hale, McCaslin and Winsley.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass as amended.

Signed by Senator Heavey.

**Staff:** Rod McAulay (786-7754)

**Background:** Mailing Confirmation Notices. As part of the process of maintaining an accurate list of registered voters, the county auditor may contract with the Postal Service to receive change of address notices or may conduct direct countywide mailings. If an auditor receives notice from the Postal Service of a change of address of a registered voter to an address outside of the county, or if, in response to a direct mailing, the auditor receives "address correction" information, the auditor shall send a confirmation notice by first class forwardable mail to the address indicated on the voter's permanent registration card and to any other address at which the county auditor could reasonably expect mail to be received by the voter.

Determination of Emergency for Special Elections. A county legislative authority must deem that an emergency exists before calling for a special election. When requested to conduct a special election by a city, town or district, the county auditor must make a determination that an emergency exists.

Withdrawal of Candidacy. A person who has filed a declaration of candidacy during the general filing period at the end of July may withdraw his or her declaration at any time before the close of business on the Thursday following the last day to file. The filing officer may permit the withdrawal of a filing for an elected office of a city, town, or special district at any time before a primary, if the primary ballots have not been ordered.

Appearing on the Ballot More Than Once. A candidate's name may not appear more than once upon a ballot unless one appearance is as a candidate for precinct committee officer.

Terminating Ongoing Absentee Voter Status. Status as an ongoing absentee voter is terminated by: the written request of the voter, death or disqualification of the voter, cancellation of the voter's registration record, or return of a ballot as undeliverable.

Delivering Special Election Ballots to Inactive Voters. Statutory provisions regarding the mailing or delivery of special election ballots or applications for special election ballots to inactive voters are in conflict, with references in three places in the election code, including a double amendment.

Diking and Drainage District Voter Lists. A county auditor is not responsible for any errors in any lists of qualified voters for diking and draining districts.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** Determination of Emergency for Special Elections. The requirement that the county legislative authority deem that an emergency exists before requesting a special election is repealed. When scheduling a special election at the request of a city, town or district, the requirement that the auditor deem that an emergency exists is repealed.

Withdrawal of Candidacy. An election filing officer may permit a candidate for city, town or special district contests where no primary is required to withdraw at any time before the election, if ballots have not been ordered. If as a result of a withdrawal there are no candidates, the election must lapse and the incumbent continue in office.

Appearing on the Ballot More Than Once. A candidate's name may not appear more than once on a ballot except for the position of precinct committee officer or any temporary elected position such as charter review board or freeholder.

Terminating Ongoing Absentee Voter Status. In addition to existing criteria, ongoing absentee voter status is terminated upon placing a voter on inactive status.

Diking and Drainage District Voter Lists. A provision which states that the county auditor is not responsible for any errors in a list of qualified voters of a diking and drainage district is repealed.

**Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** The amended bill deletes a provision granting auditors greater discretion in where to mail voter registration confirmation notices. Language is clarified regarding withdrawal of candidates and language is repealed which provides that auditors are not responsible for errors in lists of qualified voters for diking and drainage districts.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Basic housekeeping of voters registration and election procedures.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Dave Schmidt, prime sponsor; Leon Long, Adams County Auditor; Dean Logan, Chief Deputy Kitsap Co. Auditor.