

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6445

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, February 3, 2000

Title: An act relating to ballot titles.

Brief Description: Modifying ballot title laws.

Sponsors: Senators Gardner, Hale and Costa; by request of Attorney General.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 1/26/2000, 2/3/2000 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6445 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Hale, Haugen, Horn, Kline and McCaslin.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The ballot titles and summaries for initiative measures are prepared by the Attorney General. The concise statement in the form of a question which constitutes the ballot title must not contain more than 25 words. The summary must not contain more than 75 words.

The Washington State Supreme Court has decided that the state Constitution requires that an initiative measure have a single subject which is reflected in the title of the measure. This is the same requirement for bills introduced into the Legislature.

Seven calendar days after receipt of an initiative or referendum measure are provided for the Attorney General to formulate and transmit the concise statement that constitutes the ballot title to the Secretary of State. Five days are provided from the filing of the ballot title for any person to appeal the ballot title or summary.

Summary of Substitute Bill: For initiative measures and other ballot measures, the ballot title is defined as consisting of three parts: a statement of the subject of no more than five words; a concise description of no more than 25 words; and a question as specified for the particular type of ballot measure.

Five days are provided for the Attorney General to formulate and transmit the ballot title with Saturdays, Sundays and state holidays excluded from the count. Likewise, weekends and holidays are excluded from the count of five days for appealing the ballot title.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill contains editing revisions to improve clarity and consistency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: No one.