

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5271

As Passed House:

April 7, 2009

Title: An act relating to candidate filing.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions relating to candidate filing.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Oemig, McDermott and Swecker; by request of Secretary of State).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 3/26/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 4/7/09, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Eliminates the option to file a declaration of candidacy with the Secretary of State for candidates for single-county offices.
- Eliminates the filing fee requirement for declarations of candidacy for precinct committee officers.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Flannigan, Hurst and Miloscia.

Staff: Tracey O'Brien (786-7196)

Background:

In order to initiate a candidacy for office, one must file a declaration of candidacy. Historically, candidates for a single-county office filed with the county auditor and candidates for multi-county office filed with the Secretary of State (SOS). In 2005 the Legislature enacted legislation that allows candidates for single-county offices to have the

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option of filing either with the county auditor or the SOS. This option exists for candidates for over 250 offices.

Summary of Bill:

The option for single-county candidates to file a declaration of candidacy with the SOS is eliminated. The corresponding fee provisions are updated to reflect that fees for offices that include only a single county shall be paid to the county auditor. Filing fees for statewide office and for multi-county offices shall be paid to the SOS.

The \$1 filing fee required to be filed with a declaration of candidacy for a precinct committee officer (PCO) is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill returns the filing locations to historical practice. The current system is problematic as candidates cannot be certain who filed against them. This impacted over 380 candidates in 2008. It also creates an increased risk of error. The bill also repeals the \$1 filing fee for PCO filings to make it consistent with other offices compensation on a per-diem or per-meeting basis that do not have to pay a filing fee. The processing costs incurred by counties for this \$1 fee can be more than the fee for some counties.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Oemig, prime sponsor; Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State; and Kim Wyman, Thurston County Auditor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.