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SENATE BILL 6174

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senators Ericksen, Fain, and Sheldon

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1 AN ACT Relating to ballot titles for initiatives to the people;  
2 amending RCW 29A.72.050; creating a new section; and declaring an  
3 emergency.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.72.050 and 2003 c 111 s 1806 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The ballot title for an initiative to the people, an  
8 initiative to the legislature, a referendum bill, or a referendum  
9 measure consists of: (a) A statement of the subject of the measure;  
10 (b) a concise description of the measure; and (c) a question in the  
11 form prescribed in this section for the ballot measure in question.  
12 The statement of the subject of a measure must be sufficiently broad  
13 to reflect the subject of the measure, sufficiently precise to give  
14 notice of the measure's subject matter, and not exceed ten words. The  
15 concise description must contain no more than thirty words, be a true  
16 and impartial description of the measure's essential contents,  
17 clearly identify the proposition to be voted on, and not, to the  
18 extent reasonably possible, create prejudice either for or against  
19 the measure.

20 (2) For an initiative to the people, or for an initiative to the  
21 legislature for which the legislature has not proposed an

1 alternative, the ballot title must be displayed on the ballot  
2 substantially as follows:

3 "Initiative Measure No. . . . concerns (statement of  
4 subject). This measure would (concise description). Should  
5 this measure be enacted into law?

6 Yes . . . . .   
7 No . . . . .

8 (3) For an initiative to the legislature for which the  
9 legislature has proposed an alternative, the ballot title must be  
10 displayed on the ballot substantially as follows:

11 "Initiative Measure Nos. . . . and . . .B concern (statement  
12 of subject).

13 Initiative Measure No. . . . would (concise description).

14 As an alternative, the legislature has proposed Initiative  
15 Measure No. . . .B, which would (concise description).

16 1. Should either of these measures be enacted into law?

17 Yes . . . . .   
18 No . . . . .

19 2. Regardless of whether you voted yes or no above, if one of  
20 these measures is enacted, which one should it be?

21 Measure No. . . . .   
22 or  
23 Measure No. . . . .

24 (4) For a referendum bill submitted to the people by the  
25 legislature, the ballot issue must be displayed on the ballot  
26 substantially as follows:

27 "The legislature has passed . . . . Bill No. . . . concerning  
28 (statement of subject). This bill would (concise  
29 description). Should this bill be:

30 Approved . . . . .   
31 Rejected . . . . .

1 (5) For a referendum measure by state voters on a bill the  
2 legislature has passed, the ballot issue must be displayed on the  
3 ballot substantially as follows:

4 "The legislature passed . . . Bill No. . . . concerning  
5 (statement of subject) and voters have filed a sufficient  
6 referendum petition on this bill. This bill would (concise  
7 description). Should this bill be:

8 Approved . . . . .   
9 Rejected . . . . .

10 (6) The legislature may specify the statement of subject or  
11 concise description, or both, in a referendum bill that it refers to  
12 the people. The legislature may specify the concise description for  
13 an alternative it submits for an initiative to the legislature. If  
14 the legislature fails to specify these matters, the attorney general  
15 shall prepare the material that was not specified. The statement of  
16 subject and concise description as so provided must be included as  
17 part of the ballot title unless changed on appeal.

18 The attorney general shall specify the statement of subject and  
19 concise description for an initiative to the people, an initiative to  
20 the legislature, and a referendum measure. The statement of subject  
21 and concise description as so provided must be included as part of  
22 the ballot title unless changed on appeal. Any initiative to the  
23 people that imposes any tax, fee, or charge, from any source, in any  
24 amount, and for any purpose, must be given a ballot title describing  
25 the initiative as a measure that increases taxes.

26 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. This act applies to all initiatives to the  
27 people filed with the secretary of state beginning January 1, 2016.

28 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. This act is necessary for the immediate  
29 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of  
30 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes  
31 effect immediately.

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