

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5644

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, February 15, 1999

Title: An act relating to the voters' pamphlet.

Brief Description: Clarifying when a voters' pamphlet is required.

Sponsors: Senators Gardner, Horn, McDonald and Oke; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/10/99, 2/15/99 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Karen Kirkpatrick (786-7403)

Background: Preceding any general election or election to be held to fill a vacancy in any state office elected on a statewide basis, the Secretary of State is required to publish and mail a candidate's pamphlet to each individual place of residence. Preceding any general election at which any initiative measure, referendum measure, or amendment to the state Constitution is to be submitted to the people, the Secretary of State is required to publish and mail a voter's pamphlet to each individual place of residence in the state. The two pamphlets must be consolidated into a single pamphlet whenever possible.

It has been suggested that the voters of Washington State rely on the Official Voter's Pamphlet for information regarding issues and candidates on the general election ballot and that the same type of information should be provided prior to primary elections. This legislation has been requested by the Secretary of State's Office which reports receiving numerous requests for a primary pamphlet.

Summary of Bill: The Secretary of State is directed to print and distribute a voters' pamphlet when at least one statewide measure or office is scheduled to appear on the primary or general election ballot.

Appropriation: \$750,000.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The Secretary of State's Office has had many requests for a primary pamphlet. A voter's pamphlet serves an important purpose especially when there are many

issues and candidates on the ballot. Often, elections are decided by primary election, but the voters do not have a source of accurate, balanced information on the issues and positions if there is no primary pamphlet. The electronic version has been well received, and extending the publication of a primary pamphlet to print would fill a current need.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Shawn Merchant, Office of Secretary of State (pro).