

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5637

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Governmental Operations, February 19, 2013
Ways & Means, March 1, 2013

Title: An act relating to primary election voters' pamphlets.

Brief Description: Concerning primary election voters' pamphlets.

Sponsors: Senators Hasegawa, Fain, Mullet and Chase; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 2/19/13 [DP].
Ways & Means: 2/27/13, 3/01/13 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Ranking Member; Braun, Conway, Fraser and Rivers.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5637 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Nelson, Assistant Ranking Member; Bailey, Becker, Braun, Conway, Dammeier, Fraser, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Murray, Padden, Parlette and Rivers.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: The Secretary of State must print and distribute a voters' pamphlet to each household in the state, public libraries, and other locations the Secretary of State deems appropriate whenever a statewide ballot measure or office is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot. The voters' pamphlet may also be made available electronically. There is no requirement to print and distribute a voters' pamphlet for a primary election or a general election where no statewide ballot measure or office is scheduled to appear.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

When printed, the voters' pamphlet must contain the following information:

- information about ballot measures and advisory vote measures;
- candidate statements, if submitted;
- contact information for the Public Disclosure Commission;
- contact information for the major political parties;
- a statement explaining the amendatory style used in ballot measures; and
- any additional information required by law or that the Secretary of State deems informative to voters.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute) : Voters' pamphlets must be printed and distributed for the general election every year and for the primary election in even-numbered years. Publication of the primary voters' pamphlet is subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Publication of the primary voters' pamphlet is subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Governmental Operations): PRO: This is a common sense bill. We need to inform the public on what they are voting on. Printing a voters' pamphlet is a huge issue that was raised in every county during the last campaign. A number of elections were determined in the primary last year. Last year, a handful of counties printed a voters' pamphlet for the primary, and included statewide offices. This is disparate treatment of voters – some voters have information and some do not.

Persons Testifying (Governmental Operations): PRO: Senator Hasegawa, prime sponsor; Kim Wyman, Secretary of State; Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Ways & Means): PRO: Voters want more information to make informed election decisions. Many voters do not have access to the internet, or they simply prefer a paper copy of the voters' pamphlet. A voters' pamphlet in the primary is critical because many races are decided in the primary. Some counties have published a primary voters' pamphlet, while other counties do not have the resources to do so. This creates a disparity among counties. The cost of a statewide primary voters' pamphlet can be offset by the election efficiencies created in other pending legislation this session.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Kim Wyman, Secretary of State.