

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5151

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
State Government, February 8, 2017

**Title:** An act relating to authorizing the county auditor or his or her designee to appoint committees to prepare arguments advocating voters' approval and rejection of certain measures.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing the county auditor or his or her designee to appoint committees to prepare arguments advocating voters' approval and rejection of certain measures.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fain, O'Ban, Zeiger, Miloscia and Braun.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State Government: 1/25/17, 2/08/17 [DP, DNP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Transfers the authority to appoint committees preparing arguments supporting or opposing local ballot measures in a local voters' pamphlet to the county auditor.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Miloscia, Chair; Zeiger, Vice Chair; Pearson.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Ranking Minority Member; Kuderer.

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

**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. Counties and cities may publish and distribute a local voters' pamphlet with information on ballot measures appearing within the jurisdiction if authorized by local ordinance including the text of measures and arguments supporting and opposing

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measures. The county or city may also specify in the ordinance that the local voters' pamphlet shall contain information on candidates for office.

For ballot measures authorized by local governments, the legislative authority of the local government must appoint committees of no more than three persons to prepare statements advocating for the approval and, if possible, for the opposition of the ballot measure. If the legislative authority fails to appoint members to the committees by the deadline specified in the ordinance authorizing publication of the local voters' pamphlet, the county auditor may make appointments to the committees.

**Summary of Bill:** The authority to appoint members to committees preparing arguments advocating for the support or opposition of a local ballot measure in a local voters' pamphlet is transferred to the county auditor or the county auditor's designee.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** CON: The legislative authority putting the measure on the ballot has a better feel for how the community feels on the issue. Auditors have experienced trouble finding people to write statements when the duty has fallen to them in the past. Auditors do not want to be involved in the politicking of ballot measures.

**Persons Testifying:** CON: Mary Hall, Thurston County Auditor; Monty Cobb, WA Assoc. of County Officials.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.