

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1259

As Passed House:

February 8, 2023

Title: An act relating to updating the executive team of the office of the secretary of state by adding signing authority to the chief of staff position.

Brief Description: Updating the executive team of the office of the secretary of state by adding signing authority to the chief of staff position.

Sponsors: Representatives Abbarno, Stearns and Reeves; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/20/23, 1/25/23 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/8/23, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds the Chief of Staff in the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) to the list of individuals who have the power to perform any act or duty relating to the OSOS.
- Authorizes the Chief of Staff to have signing authority and specifies that existing authority in statute for the Assistant Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of State.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ramos, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Abbarno, Ranking Minority Member; Christian, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Low and Mena.

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

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

The Secretary of State (Secretary) is required to perform certain duties as enumerated under statute which include:

- keeping a register of and attesting to the official acts of the Governor;
- affixing the state seal to commissions, pardons, authentications of certificates, and other public instruments to which the signature of the Governor is required;
- recording all articles of incorporation, deeds, or other papers filed with the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS);
- receiving and filing all official bonds of officers required to be filed with the OSOS;
- receiving and filing receipts for all books distributed by the Assistant Secretary of State (Assistant Secretary);
- certifying the election returns for Constitutional officers and certifying all names of other candidates who have received the highest number of votes for any office the incumbent of which is to be commissioned by the Governor;
- furnishing a certified copy of any part of any law, record, or other instrument filed with the OSOS;
- presenting to the Speaker of the House of Representatives a full account of all purchases made and expenses incurred by the Secretary on account of the state;
- filing an impression of each seal in use by any state officer;
- keeping a record of all fees charged or received by the Secretary;
- establishing a Division of Elections; and
- administering and conducting the Washington State Legacy Project.

The Secretary also has various authority granted by statute such as:

- attesting to the authenticity of the signature of a public official in the state;
- entering into a memorandum of agreement or contract with any agency or private entity to provide services under the various corporation statutes of the state;
- appointing authenticating officers and delegating to those officers the power to sign for the Secretary any document which requires the Secretary's signature as approved by the Secretary; and
- appointing one Assistant Secretary and one Deputy Secretary who has the power to perform any act or duty relating to the OSOS that the Secretary has.

Summary of Bill:

The OSOS Chief of Staff is added to the list of individuals who have the power to perform any act or duty relating to the OSOS. The Chief of Staff is given signing authority, which is also statutorily specified for the Assistant Secretary and the Deputy Secretary.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill does not create new positions in the OSOS, but rather, it simply adds one additional person to the list of people who may sign on the Secretary's behalf. Travel, sickness, and other unforeseen events come up, and this authority is needed to afford the OSOS with more flexibility.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Peter Abbarno, prime sponsor; and Brian Hatfield, Office of Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.