

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5411

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 5, 2003

Title: An act relating to nonpartisan sheriffs.

Brief Description: Authorizing nonpartisan sheriffs.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Hale, Brandland, Haugen, Reardon, Kline, Prentice, Regala, McCaslin, Carlson, Winsley and Schmidt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/5/03, 3/5/03 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Fairley, Kastama and McCaslin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Horn.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: County sheriffs are nominated and elected as partisan candidates, except in home rule counties where the charter provides otherwise. The Board of County Commissioners fills, by appointment, vacancies in county offices.

Summary of Bill: Candidates for the office of county sheriff are nominated and elected as nonpartisan candidates, except in home rule counties where the charter declares the position of sheriff to be a partisan office. A new section is added to the county sheriff chapter requiring the Board of County Commissioners to fill, by appointment, a vacancy in the office of county sheriff.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: There is no need for partisan politics in law enforcement. People don't care about which party the sheriff identifies with as long as he gets the job done.

Testimony Against: People have a right to know the political ideology of their elected officials.

Testified: PRO: Senator Marilyn Rasmussen, prime sponsor; Mike Brasfield, Jefferson County Sheriff; Gary Edwards, Thurston County Sheriff; CON: Michael Kepcha.