

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6226

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, February 6, 2004  
Ways & Means, February 23, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to providing an alternative primary system.

**Brief Description:** Relating to providing an alternative primary system.

**Sponsors:** Senators Roach and Schmidt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 1/21/04, 2/6/04 [DP-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/23/04 [w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.  
Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Horn and McCaslin.

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Fairley, Fraser, Hale, Honeyford, Johnson, Pflug, Roach and Winsley.

**Staff:** Steve Jones (786-7440)

**Background:** The method used in Washington to nominate candidates for the general election ballot is called the "blanket primary." This primary allows the votes of voters who are not members of a major political party to be counted in determining what candidate will run in the general election as the major political party's candidate or standard bearer. This feature of the Washington blanket primary was held unconstitutional by the federal Court of Appeals because, in the court's opinion, the major political parties' First Amendment right of free association was violated. The Secretary of State has petitioned the United States Supreme Court to review the lower federal court's decision. The Supreme Court has said that it will issue its decision on this petition on February 23, 2004.

**Summary of Bill:** The Legislature intends to provide for an alternative primary system.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The Libertarians have their own proposal for a new primary. We think the title only bill will be an appropriate vehicle should one be needed on the floor.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Larry McLaren, LP; Richard Shephard, LP; J. Mills, LP.