

6453-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Hargrove, Hale, T. Sheldon, Schmidt, Winsley, McCaslin, Carlson, Fairley and Rasmussen; by request of Secretary of State)

Brief Description: Enacting a modified blanket primary. (REVISED FOR ENGROSSED: Creating a qualifying primary.) (REVISED FOR PASSED LEGISLATURE: Enacting a qualifying primary.) Revised for 1st Substitute: Enacting the Qualifying Primary Act.

SB 6453-S - DIGEST

(NOT SUBSTITUTED FOR - SEE ORIGINAL BILL)

Declares that the purpose of any primary held in this state is to qualify candidates to appear on the general election ballot. Primary elections do not function as a procedure to determine the nominees of political parties. The sole purpose of allowing candidates to identify a political party preference is to provide to voters a brief description of each candidate's political philosophy, which the voters may consider when casting their votes at a primary or general election.

Provides that, in a primary election, each voter, regardless of party affiliation, may vote for any candidate listed on the ballot, and the two candidates who receive the most votes, also known as the top two vote getters, and who receive at least one percent of the total votes cast for that office, advance to the general election. Primary election voters are not choosing a party's nominee. A qualifying primary ensures more choice, greater participation, increased privacy, and a sense of fairness for the voters.

Declares that the provisions of this act relating to primaries must be liberally construed to further the following interests: (1) The legislature finds that the process of determining which candidates will appear on the general election ballot or be elected to office is a public process, in which all voters must be permitted to participate. The legislature further finds that it is not in the public interest to expend public funds on a nominating process that does not permit the participation of all voters without regard to party affiliation or requires a public declaration of party affiliation;

(2) All qualified registered voters of the state of Washington should be permitted to participate in all meaningful stages of the process for selecting candidates to appear on the general election ballot by voting for the candidate of their choice; and

(3) No registered voter of the state of Washington should be required to divulge to any public or private entity his or her party affiliation, if any, as a prerequisite to voting.

Repeals RCW 29A.04.157, 29A.20.110, 29A.20.130, 29A.20.200, 29A.24.200, 29A.24.210, 29A.28.010, 29A.28.020, 29A.36.190, 29A.52.130, and 29A.04.903.