

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5742

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 17, 2005
Ways & Means, March 7, 2005

Title: An act relating to review of county election procedures.

Brief Description: Strengthening review and correction of county election procedures.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Berkey, Fairley, Benson, Parlette, Mulliken, Rockefeller and Kohl-Welles; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/14/05, 2/17/05 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 3/4/05, 3/7/05 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Fairley, Haugen, Kline, McCaslin, Mulliken and Pridemore.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Fairley, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: The election review staff of the office of the Secretary of State is charged with conducting election reviews in counties when the unofficial returns of an election for state or federal office indicate that a mandatory recount is likely. Reviews are to be conducted in as many selected counties as time and staffing permit. Additionally, the election review staff can conduct a review at the direction of the Secretary of State. Funding for such reviews has not been provided in recent years, consequently election reviews have not been conducted.

Summary of Bill: Election reviews must be done in each county at least once every three years. If staffing or budget levels do not permit a three year election review cycle, reviews must be done as often as possible.

The county auditor or canvassing board is responsible for review follow up and must respond in writing listing the steps that will be taken to correct any problems. The Secretary must visit

the county before the next state election to verify the county has taken appropriate steps to correct any problems identified in the review.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on companion bill (HB 1749).

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Funding for election reviews was stopped several years ago, and consequently no reviews were being done. The recent general election uncovered problems in multiple counties that would have been found and addressed in an election review. County auditors welcome the election reviews.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Sam Reed, Katie Blinn, Shane Hamlin; Office of Secretary of State; Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County Auditor; Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Auditor.