

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1526

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 26, 2007

Title: An act relating to presidential primary ballots.

Brief Description: Modifying the form of the presidential primary ballot.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunt, Chandler, Armstrong, Ormsby, Kenney, Linville and Moeller;
by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/07, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 3/26/07 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Kline, Pridemore and Swecker.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: Candidates for president are nominated at national nominating conventions held by political parties. Delegates to the national nominating conventions are allocated based on political party rules. In Washington, major political parties can allocate delegates to the national nominating convention based in whole or in part on the participation in precinct caucuses, conventions, and results of the state presidential primary. The state presidential primary is held on the fourth Tuesday in May, or at an alternative date as provided for in state law, of each year in which a president of the United States is to be elected.

The presidential primary is conducted using separate political party ballots, if requested by the party, and an "unaffiliated" ballot listing the names of all the candidates. Major political parties in this state do not use votes cast on unaffiliated ballots when allocating delegates to the national conventions.

Summary of Bill: The requirement to provide an unaffiliated presidential primary ballot is eliminated. Presidential primary ballots must be consistent with the requirements for consolidated primary ballots or physically separate primary ballots.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The bill eliminates the unaffiliated ballots at the presidential primary. If there is a presidential primary, democrats will vote for democrats and republicans will vote for republicans. It's misleading to give voters a ballot that neither party is going to consider. Voters are angry when they learn that their ballot doesn't really count towards anything, and its expensive to print up the unaffiliated ballot.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hunt, prime sponsor; Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State; Kim Wyman, Washington State Association of County Auditors.