

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5064

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections, January 20, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to membership on the Washington citizens' commission on salaries for elected officials.

**Brief Description:** Changing membership provisions relating to the Washington citizens' commission on salaries for elected officials.

**Sponsors:** Senator Nelson; by request of Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/17/11, 1/20/11 [DP, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Prentice, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Chase and Nelson.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton and Roach.

**Staff:** Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

**Background:** The Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials (Commission) was created in 1987 by a constitutional amendment. House Joint Resolution 49, the 78th amendment to the Constitution passed at the November 4, 1986, general election. That measure removed the salary setting function from the Legislature and placed it in the hands of an independent citizen commission.

The Commission is charged with setting the salaries of the elected officials in the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of government. The statutory mandate of the Commission is to: "Base the elected officials' salaries on realistic standards in order to pay them

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according to the duties of their office and to attract citizens of the highest quality to public service."

The Constitution prohibits the Commission from decreasing the salary of any elected official during the official's term of office.

The Commission consists of 16 members. Nine members are selected by lot by the Secretary of State from among registered voters, one from each of the nine congressional districts in the state. The remaining seven members are selected jointly by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the Senate with the requirement that all of these persons have personnel management experience.

No state official, public employee, or lobbyist, or their immediate family members is eligible to serve on the Commission. Immediate family is defined as the parents, spouse or domestic partner, siblings, children, or dependent relative of the official, employee, or lobbyist whether or not living in the household of the official.

**Summary of Bill:** The definition of immediate family is changed as it is applied to public employees. The parents, spouse or domestic partner, siblings, children, or dependent relative of a public employee who live in the employee's household are not eligible to serve on the Commission. If these immediate family members are not living in the public employee's household, they are eligible to serve on the Commission.

The specific number of appointees representing congressional districts is removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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: There are over 500,000 public employees in the state of Washington. This bill will modify the definition of an immediate family member to allow access to over 2 million people who can serve on the Salary Commission. Additionally, the change in statutory language will allow the Commission to appoint a member from the new congressional district.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Carol Sayer, Citizens' Commission Salaries; Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State.