

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1195

As of March 19, 2013

Title: An act relating to candidate names on the primary ballot.

Brief Description: Concerning primaries.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Wylie, Buys, Hunt, Van De Wege, Appleton, Orwall, Ryu and Jinkins).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/07/13, 96-1.

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 3/19/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The names of all candidates who file a declaration of candidacy will appear on the primary election ballot, with some exceptions. No primary election is held for any single position in any city, town, district, or district court if, after the last day allowed for candidates to withdraw, there are no more than two candidates who filed for the same position.

Additionally, if a special election is required in an odd-numbered year to fill a vacancy in any office that is scheduled to be voted upon for a full term in an even-numbered year, no primary election may be held for that office if no more than two candidates filed a declaration of candidacy.

Summary of Bill: No primary election may be held for any nonpartisan office if, after the last day allowed for candidates to withdraw, there are no more than two candidates filed for the position.

A primary election may be held in an odd-numbered year to fill a vacancy in any office that is scheduled to be voted upon for a full term in an even-numbered year regardless of how many candidates filed for the position.

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: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Special rules on elections to fill off-year vacancies are inconvenient and not good for candidates getting to know the public. Community groups and media take a closer look at candidates if they appear on a primary ballot. Contributions are limited to half of what a regular race would be if there is no primary, and being able to raise more money makes it possible for new faces to get involved. The Secretary of State supports the bill because it provides net savings. County auditors are generally supportive of this bill, although the Secretary of State's savings put costs onto counties.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Wylie, prime sponsor; Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State; Monty Cobb, WA Assn. of County Officials.