

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1858

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Security, February 22, 2016

Title: An act relating to prohibiting the names of county auditors and the secretary of state from being included on ballot envelopes and in voters' pamphlets when running for reelection.

Brief Description: Prohibiting the names of county auditors and the secretary of state from being included on ballot envelopes and in voters' pamphlets when running for reelection.

Sponsors: Representatives Shea, S. Hunt, Taylor, G. Hunt, Reykdal, Condotta, Tharinger and McCaslin.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/03/15, 97-0; 2/11/16, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 3/26/15 [DP]; 2/18/16, 2/22/16 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Pearson, Vice Chair; Habib, McCoy and Takko.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Voters' Pamphlets. The Secretary of State (Secretary) must publish a voters' pamphlet for each general election in which at least one statewide measure or office will appear on the ballot. The Secretary determines the format and layout of the voters' pamphlet. State voters' pamphlets must contain a candidate's statement, photograph, and contact information.

Counties and first-class or code cities may publish a local voters' pamphlet containing information on election measures and candidates within that jurisdiction. The local voters' pamphlet may include candidate statements and photographs.

Ballot Envelopes. The county auditor prepares and mails ballots to all registered voters in the county. The ballot is sent with a security envelope and a return envelope. The county auditor must include a declaration for the voter to sign and instructions on how to complete and return the ballot to the auditor.

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.

Summary of Bill: The name of the Secretary may not appear in the state voters' pamphlet in the Secretary's official capacity if the Secretary is a candidate for office in the same year the pamphlet is prepared, but may appear within the candidate's information that is normally included in the state voters' pamphlet.

A county auditor's name may not appear in the local voters' pamphlet in the county auditor's official capacity if the county auditor is a candidate for office in the same year the pamphlet is prepared, but may appear within the candidate's information that is normally included in the local voters' pamphlet. The county auditor's name also may not appear on any security or return envelope or voting instructions sent out to eligible voters in a year the auditor is a candidate for office.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: Testimony From 2016 Regular Session. PRO: County auditors and the Secretary of State should not get what amounts to a free mailing by putting their names on voters' pamphlets and election materials.

Testimony From 2015 Regular Session. PRO: This furthers the longstanding policy that public resources should not be used for campaigning.

Persons Testifying: Persons Testifying From 2016 Regular Session. PRO: Representative Shea, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Testifying From 2015 Regular Session. PRO: Representative Shea, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying: No one.