

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5151

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government & Elections, January 20, 2023

Title: An act relating to updating the executive team of the office of the secretary of state by adding a chief of staff position.

Brief Description: Updating the executive team of the office of the secretary of state by adding a chief of staff position. [**Revised for 1st Substitute:** Updating the executive team of the office of the secretary of state by adding signing authority to the chief of staff position.]

Sponsors: Senators Valdez, Hunt, Nguyen and Nobles; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 1/17/23, 1/20/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Codifies the position of Chief of Staff in the Secretary of State's Office.
- Authorizes the Assistant Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of State, and Chief of Staff to have signing authority on behalf of the Secretary of State.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5151 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Valdez, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Dozier, Fortunato, Hasegawa and Kuderer.

Staff: Megan Tudor (786-7478)

Background: The Office of the Secretary of State was established in 1889 with the

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adoption of the Washington State Constitution. The Secretary of State (SOS) is an elected position with a four year term and is the chief elections officer, chief corporations officer, and supervisor of the State Archives. Key responsibilities of the SOS include supervising state and local elections, certifying the results of state primaries and general elections, producing and distributing the state voter pamphlet, and collecting and maintaining state historical records.

The Secretary of the State's executive office employs an Assistant Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of State. These executive positions are authorized by the SOS to perform any act or duty relating to the Office of the Secretary of State and the SOS is responsible for the acts of the Assistant Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of State.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): The position of Chief of Staff at the Secretary of State's Office is codified in statute. The Assistant Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of State, and Chief of Staff are explicitly given signing authority on behalf of the SOS.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute: PRO: This bill codifies the position of the chief of staff and does not add a new FTE. It gives signing authority to the Secretary of State chief of staff. This is consistent with other state's chief of staff duties and authority. This authority does not have limitations within the bill, but the Secretary will limit scope of signing authority internally within the office. This signing authority is a necessary back up if the Secretary of State is away and, for example, the Governor needs an emergency proclamation signed.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Javier Valdez, Prime Sponsor; Brian Hatfield, Office of Secretary of State; Steve Hobbs, Office of Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.