S-0542.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SENATE BILL 5225**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators MacEwen and Liias

AN ACT Relating to candidate filing requirements; amending RCW 29A.24.091; reenacting and amending RCW 29A.84.320; and adding a new section to chapter 29A.36 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 29A.24.091 and 2023 c 394 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section:

(a) A filing fee of ten dollars shall accompany the declaration of candidacy for any office with a fixed annual salary of one thousand dollars or less. A filing fee equal to one percent of the annual salary of the office at the time of filing shall accompany the declaration of candidacy for any office with a fixed annual salary of more than one thousand dollars per annum. No filing fee need accompany a declaration of candidacy for precinct committee officer or any office for which compensation is on a per diem or per meeting attended basis, or any declaration of candidacy for a write-in candidate filed after the close of filing and more than eighteen days prior to a primary or election.

((~~(2)~~)) (b) A filing fee of twenty-five dollars shall accompany the declaration of candidacy for write-in candidates for any office with a fixed annual salary of one thousand dollars or less if filed eighteen days or less prior to a primary or election.

((~~(3)~~)) (c) A filing fee equal to one percent of the annual salary of the office at the time of filing shall accompany a declaration of candidacy for write-in candidates for any office with a fixed annual salary of more than one thousand dollars per annum if filed eighteen days or less prior to a primary or election.

(2) For candidates for statewide offices, United States senate, United States house of representatives, and Washington state legislature, half of the filing fee as described in subsection (1) of this section must be provided upon filing and half of the filing fee and the signature petition required under subsection (3) of this section must be provided upon the conclusion of filing week as designated under RCW 29A.24.050.

(3)(a) Candidates as described in subsection (2) of this section shall submit with the candidate's declaration of candidacy a signature petition as follows:

(i) For candidates for the Washington state legislature, the petition must contain not less than 500 signatures;

(ii) For candidates for the United States house of representatives, the petition must contain not less than 750 signatures; and

(iii) For candidates for statewide offices and the United States senate, the petition must contain not less than 1,000 signatures.

(b) The signatures must be of voters registered to vote within the jurisdiction of the office for which the candidate is filing.

(4) A candidate who lacks sufficient assets or income at the time of filing to pay the filing fee required by this section shall submit with the candidate's declaration of candidacy a filing fee petition. The petition shall contain not less than a number of signatures of registered voters equal to the number of dollars of the filing fee. The signatures shall be of voters registered to vote within the jurisdiction of the office for which the candidate is filing.

(5) The secretary of state may increase candidate filing fees by rule in order to cover the expense of signature verifications as required to comply with subsection (3) of this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 29A.84.320 and 2003 c 111 s 2118 and 2003 c 53 s 177 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

A person is guilty of a class B felony punishable according to chapter 9A.20 RCW who files a declaration of candidacy for any public office of:

(1) A nonexistent or fictitious person; or

(2) The name of any person not his or her true name; or

(3) A name similar to that of an incumbent seeking reelection to the same office with intent to confuse and mislead the electors by taking advantage of the public reputation of the incumbent; or

(4) A surname similar to one who has already filed for the same office, and whose political reputation is widely known, with intent to confuse and mislead the electors by capitalizing on the public reputation of the candidate ((~~who had previously filed~~)), regardless of whether the declaration of candidacy is filed before or after such person.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 29A.36 RCW to read as follows:

Whenever, in the judgment of the filing officer, two or more candidates have filed for the same office whose names are so similar as to be confusing to voters, the filing officer shall list such candidates on the ballot in consecutive order and differentiate between the candidates by the inclusion of additional information in connection with the name as it appears on the ballot. Such differentiation may be made by the inclusion of the candidate's occupation, status as incumbent or challenger, or by any other means which, in the judgment of the filing officer, fairly and impartially distinguishes the candidates. The filing officer may solicit suggestions and input from the candidates involved in order to resolve the situation.

**--- END ---**