

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5156**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS,  
MARCH 4, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Requiring election officers to review candidates' filings to determine residency.

**SPONSORS:** Senators McCaslin, Sutherland, Roach, Matson and Madsen.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5156 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Madsen, and Matson.

**Minority Report:** That it not be substituted.

Signed by Senator Sutherland.

**Staff:** Barbara Howard (786-7410)

**Hearing Dates:** February 26, 1991; March 4, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

There is no requirement for local election officers to make sure that candidates for various offices reside in the jurisdictions where they wish to run. In a recent port district election, a commissioner candidate was elected, only to find that he was not a resident and therefore could not serve. Some method of proving the candidate's eligibility might reduce election costs.

**SUMMARY:**

Election officers must review filings to determine that candidates reside and are registered to vote in the district for which they file. A candidate's name may not be placed on a ballot if it is determined that individual is not registered in the geographic area required to be able to assume office if elected.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

Election officers need only check to see that a candidate is a registered voter in the jurisdiction. Candidates for Congress are not affected.

Each city, county or special district must provide the most current information describing its boundaries to the appropriate election officer.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This would prevent an ineligible candidate from filing or being elected and could save the cost of potential lawsuits and new elections. The change in the substitute to eliminate the residency requirement makes the procedure more workable. The bill would also allow a citizen to find out if he or she lived in a district where the individual could run for office. Making sure that congressional districts are exempted reduces the administrative burden.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

This procedure imposes a significant burden on election officials for a very limited result.

**TESTIFIED:** Scott Taylor, Washington Public Ports Association (pro); David Elliott, Office of the Secretary of State (pro)