

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2612

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to executive sessions of governing bodies.

Brief Description: Eliminating elective office candidate qualification evaluations from topics for executive sessions of governing bodies.

Sponsors: Representatives Eide, Johanson, R. Meyers and Roland.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 1, 1994, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams, Ranking Minority Member; L. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Conway; Dyer; King and Pruitt.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: The state's Open Public Meetings Act requires meetings of the multi-member governing bodies of state agencies and such governing bodies of units, agencies, and entities of local government to be open to the public. In general, actions taken by these governing bodies must be conducted in open meetings. However, certain actions may be taken during "executive sessions" from which the public is excluded. Among the actions that may be taken in such an executive session is the evaluation of the qualifications of a candidate for appointment to elective office. Any interview of such a candidate and the final action appointing a person to the office must be conducted in an open public meeting.

Summary of Bill: Evaluating the qualifications of a candidate for appointment to elective office is no longer an activity which may expressly be conducted in an executive session of a multi-member governing body of a state agency or entity of local government.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: (1) Candidates for elective office are subject to public scrutiny in their campaigns but the evaluation of persons in the appointment process to fill vacancies in elective offices is not subject to that scrutiny. These evaluations should be open to the public. (2) This bill represents one way in which government can be opened to the public.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: In Favor: Representative Eide, Prime Sponsor; Craig Dennis, Times Community Newspapers; Diana Kramer, Washington Newspaper Publishers Association; and Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers of Washington and Washington Association of Broadcasters.