

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia Washington

Bil Analysis

Bil No. HB 2781

Regulating polling place interpreters
Brief title

Hrg. Date: 2/3/98

Reps. Dunn/Honeyford
Sponsor

Staff John Carmichael
Comm. on Govt. Admin.
Phone: 786-7093

BACKGROUND:

Federal law requires state or political subdivision to provide non-English language voting material and assistance to more than 5 percent of its citizens members of a single-language minority group. Voters who require assistance in marking ballots due to blindness, disability, inability to read or write may choose a person to assist them.

Several acts are prohibited at polling places within 300 feet of polling places on the day of an election or primary. Prohibited acts include: 1) persuading or attempting to persuade a voter to vote for or against a candidate or ballot measure, 2) circulating cards or handbills of any kind, and 3) engaging in any practice that interferes with the freedom of voters or the administration of the polling place.

SUMMARY:

Qualifications and restrictions for interpreters are established. These qualifications and restrictions do not apply to a person brought to the polling place by a voter to act as his or her interpreter.

Qualifications of interpreters

Interpreters must apply to the county auditor by the Friday before a primary or election. Interpreters must demonstrate that they are certified as an interpreter by the Office of the Administrator of the Courts or by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or possess a letter of qualification as an interpreter from DSHS. Interpreters must present a letter of authorization from the county auditor to the precinct election supervisor before providing interpretation.

Continued

Acts prohibited

Interpreters are prohibited from: 1) electioneering; 2) wearing clothing with a name, slogan or symbol associated with a campaign, political party or interest group; 3) touching a ballot other than their own; and 4) interfering with voters, the voting process or the work of poll workers. Interpreters must comply with any other guidelines or rules established by the county auditor.

FISCAL NOTE: Not requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bills passed.