

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1721

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to the state voters' pamphlet.

Brief Description: Directing a state voters' pamphlet for primaries.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero, McMorris, Ogden and Schual-Berke; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/14/01, 2/19/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Secretary of State to print and distribute a voters' pamphlet for primary elections that include a statewide measure or office.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives McMorris, Republican Co-Chair; Romero, Democratic Co-Chair; Miloscia, Democratic Vice Chair; Haigh, Lambert, McDermott and D. Schmidt.

Staff: Catherine Blinn (786-7114).

Background:

The Secretary of State is required to print and distribute a voters' pamphlet whenever a statewide measure or office appears on a general election ballot. The pamphlet must include candidate statements as well as information on ballot measures, campaigns, public disclosure requirements, political parties, precinct committee officers, and the caucus and convention process for presidential elections. The pamphlet must be distributed to households, libraries, and other appropriate locations, and may be made available in electronic form.

Summary of Bill:

The Secretary of State is required to print and distribute a voters' pamphlet for both primary and general elections that involve a statewide measure or office.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Voters value and use voters' pamphlets because they provide useful information about the candidates. The 2000 primary pamphlet was well received. Many counties find funds to produce primary pamphlets because the voters want and need the information. A statewide voters' pamphlet for primary elections could reduce costs for the counties because the printing and postage costs could be prorated between the counties and the Office of the Secretary of State. It is important to better educate the voters to ensure that their votes count. The cost of producing the pamphlets has declined to 21 cents per pamphlet. A primary election pamphlet is especially significant for judicial elections because most judicial elections are decided in the primary election. The 2000 primary pamphlet was 48 pages and cost approximately \$805,000, approximately \$200,000 of which was paid by a judicial association. Educating the voters will be especially important if the date of the primary changes or if the form of the primary changes.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Sam Reed, Secretary of State; and Shawn Merchant, Office of the Secretary of State.