State Government Committee

HB 2336

Brief Description: Modifying the administration of elections.

Sponsors: Representatives McMorris, Rockefeller, Romero and Schmidt; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief Summary of Bill

· Expands membership on the State Election Administration and Certification Board.

· Establishes a 5-year cycle for conducting election procedures reviews.

· Eliminates mandatory training for political party elections observers.

· Requires training curriculum be provided to political party observers and members of county canvassing boards.

· Eliminates requirement that the Election Assistance and Clearinghouse Program communicate with political parties regarding election issues.

Hearing Date: 1/25/02

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Under administration of elections law, the Washington State Election Administration and Certification Board (Board) and the Secretary of State (Secretary) jointly adopt rules governing 1) the training of various election personnel, 2) policies and procedures for conducting election reviews, and 3) policies and standards regarding the review and appeal process for elections. The Board is composed of the Secretary of State, or his/her designee, the State Director of Elections, or his/her designee, four county auditors appointed by the Washington State Association of County Auditors, or their alternates, one member from each of the two largest political party caucuses in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and one representative from each major political party.

It is the Secretary's duty to establish and operate training and certification programs for elections administrations officials, and personnel and training programs for political party

observers.   Mandatory training is required within 18 months of undertaking elections duties for the following persons:
· Elections Division personnel in the Secretary's office;
· County elections administrators;
· County canvassing board members;
· Political party elections observers; and
· Any other person or group charged with election administration responsibilities if required by rule by the Secretary of State.

The election review staff in the Secretary's office is required to conduct reviews of election-related policies, procedures and practices in cases where a mandatory recount is likely, as well as periodic county reviews at the direction of the Secretary of State or request of a county auditor.

Within the Elections Division of the Secretary of State, the Election Assistance and Clearinghouse Program provides regular communication among the Secretary, local election officials, and major and minor political parties regarding relevant election issues, and responds to inquiries from elections administrators, political parties, and others regarding election information.

Summary of Bill:

Membership on the Washington State Election Administration and Certification Board is changed to include a designee of the Secretary of State and a designee of the State Director of Elections to serve on the Board.

Mandatory training is no longer required for political party observers. The Secretary of State will provide training curriculum to political party observers, as well as to members of county canvassing boards.

Political party election observers are no longer required to receive the mandatory training.

Election review staff will conduct reviews in conjunction with a county primary or special or general election at least once every five years.

The Election Assistance and Clearinghouse Program is no longer required to communicate to major and minor political parties regarding relevant elections issues, or respond to political party inquiries regarding election information.

Rulemaking Authority: No express authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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