

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1108

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
State & Local Government, March 19, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to the secretary of state.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing the secretary of state to observe county election facilities.

**Sponsors:** By Representatives Bush, Kenney, Talcott, Lambert, D. Schmidt, Lantz, Benson, Cox, Campbell, Woods, Veloria, Esser, Haigh, Mulliken, Ogden, Mielke, Boldt, Casada, Morell, Buck, Pearson, Roach, Clements, Schoesler, Romero, Darneille, Carrell, Van Luven, Edwards, Kagi and Hurst.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State & Local Government: 3/19/01 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Gardner, Hale, Haugen, Horn, Kline, T. Sheldon and Swecker.

**Staff:** Eugene Green (786-7405)

**Background:** During a special, primary, or general election, ballots are handled, processed, counted, and tabulated in several locations:

- At the polls: Ballots cast at the polls may be tabulated by poll-site ballot counting devices and electronically transmitted to a central reporting location after the close of the polls. In counties not using poll-site ballot counting devices, the ballots are transported to the county counting center for tabulation.
- At the county counting center: Voted, untallied ballots cast at the polling sites, absentee ballots, and mail ballots are delivered to the county counting center where they are processed. This process is open to the public and subject to observation by representatives from the major parties. However, only authorized personnel may touch a ballot or operate a ballot tallying machine.
- At the canvassing board: The county canvassing board reviews and tabulates ballots that were questioned at the polls or at the counting center.

The Secretary of State is the chief election officer for all elections. The Secretary is responsible for canvassing the final election returns for measures and offices that affect more than one county. He or she is also responsible for certifying and inspecting voting machines, and training county election officials.

**Summary of Bill:** The Secretary of State may make unannounced visits to county election offices to observe the handling, processing, counting, or tabulation of ballots.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This makes explicit what is currently implicit. This breathes some fresh air into the system and protects our county auditors from unfounded allegations.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Roger Bush, prime sponsor; Kim Wyman, WSACA, Thurston County Auditor.