

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5141

As Passed Senate, March 9, 2001

Title: An act relating to nonpartisan sheriffs.

Brief Description: Requiring nonpartisan sheriffs.

Sponsors: Senators Hale, Patterson, Costa, McCaslin, Haugen, Sheahan, Finkbeiner, Carlson, Hochstatter, Oke, Winsley and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 1/24/01, 1/31/01 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/9/01, 29-20.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Horn.

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: The office of sheriff is a partisan office in all counties, except those with home rule charters. In the five counties with home rule charters, the office of sheriff is as follows: Clallam, King, Snohomish, Whatcom “ nonpartisan; Pierce “ appointed.

Summary of Bill: The office of sheriff is a nonpartisan office, except in a county for which the position is declared to be a partisan office by the county’s home rule charter. Candidates for the office of county sheriff are nominated in nonpartisan primaries. A vacancy in the office of sheriff is filled by appointment of the board of county commissioners.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This is a professional position. Party affiliation should not be a factor as to who is the most qualified candidate. All five home rule charter counties have nonpartisan sheriffs.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Sheriff Mike Hawley, Island County; Sheriff Rick Bart, Snohomish County; Undersheriff Pat Lee, King County; Sheriff Dale Brandland.