

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5859

As of May 11, 2001

Title: An act relating to preserving the blanket primary by advancing to the general election ballot the two candidates receiving the most votes regardless of political party affiliation.

Brief Description: Preserving the blanket primary by advancing to the general election ballot the two candidates receiving the most votes regardless of political party affiliation.

Sponsors: Senators Gardner and Carlson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 4/16/01.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Washington currently has a blanket partisan primary. In a blanket primary, the candidate with the most votes for an office within his or her political party is the party's nominee. Any voter may vote for any one candidate for a partisan office regardless of the candidate's or the voter's party affiliation. A voter may vote for candidates affiliated with one political party for one office and vote for a candidate affiliated with another political party for another office.

Major political parties may fill vacancies on the party ticket because of the death or disqualification of a candidate or because no one filed to run for the office.

A minor political party's candidate must receive 1 percent of the vote for that office at the primary in order to advance to the general election.

Summary of Bill: The two candidates that receive the highest and second highest number of votes in the primary for a partisan office advance to the general election, regardless of political party affiliation.

A void in a partisan candidacy occurs only when no candidate has filed for office. If a void in candidacy occurs, a special filing period is reopened for three days. Political parties no longer may fill in vacancies on party tickets.

No change is made in how nonpartisan candidates are selected for the general election, or how a candidate files for office.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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