

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5741

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 17, 2005
Ways & Means, March 7, 2005

Title: An act relating to voters' pamphlets.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions on voters' pamphlets.

Sponsors: Senators Kastama, Roach, Fairley, Benson, Prentice, Berkey, Haugen, Sheldon, McAuliffe, Shin, Parlette, Mulliken, Doumit and Kohl-Welles; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/14/05, 2/17/05 [DPS-WM, DNP].

Ways & Means: 3/4/05, 3/7/05 [DP2S, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5741 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Fairley, Haugen, Kline and Pridemore.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin and Mulliken.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5741 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Fairley, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Schoesler.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: The Secretary of State must prepare and distribute a state voters' pamphlet whenever at least one statewide measure or office is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot. This pamphlet must be distributed to each household in the state, public

libraries, and any other location deemed appropriate by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State may produce and distribute a primary voters' pamphlet.

When statewide ballot issues are to be decided, the voters' pamphlet may contain only arguments for and against the measure, together with rebuttals, that have been prepared by committees. The committees may have up to six members each. The first two members are appointed by the Secretary of State and the presiding officers of the House of Representatives and the Senate. These first two members could be legislators, sponsors, advocates, or opponents of the statewide ballot measures.

The initial two members select up to four additional members. The committee elects a chairperson.

After one committee submits its statement for the measure to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State transmits that statement to the committee against the measure for a rebuttal argument which may not interject new points.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: The Secretary of State must print and distribute a primary voters' pamphlet.

The first appointments to the committee may be either one or two in number. Those one or two initial members may appoint enough additional committee members to create a committee of at most six members.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The Second Substitute bill deletes the authorization for the Secretary of State to accept paid advertising for publication in the voters' pamphlet.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill did not address the Secretary of State's option to sell advertising.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For (Government Operations & Elections): Six counties print primary voters' pamphlets for local races. Not having a state primary voters' pamphlet misses an opportunity to provide better information to the voters. An Ellway Poll found the voters' pamphlets to be the number one tool voters use to prepare to vote.

Testimony Against: (Government Operations & Elections) None.

Who Testified (Government Operations & Elections): PRO: Sam Reed, Secretary of State; Katie Blinn and Shane Hamlin, Secretary of State, Elections Division; Kim Wyman, Thurston County Auditor; Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Auditor; David Anderson, Your Vote Counts.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The publication and distribution of a voters' pamphlet for the primary election has taken on an increased importance because the state will be implementing the new "top two" primary election method for the first time in 2005.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Who Testified (Ways & Means): PRO: Shane Hamlin, Office of the Secretary of State.