

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6422

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, January 26, 2006

Title: An act relating to election recounts.

Brief Description: Modifying election recount provisions.

Sponsors: Senator Kastama.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 1/24/06, 1/26/06 [DP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Roach, Ranking Minority Member and Benton.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: Election recounts are mandatory in certain circumstances. When the difference between the candidate elected and the candidate defeated is less than 2,000 votes and less than one-half of one percent of the total number of votes cast for both candidates, the recount is done by the vote tallying system. The recount must be conducted manually if the difference is less than 1,000 votes and one-fourth of one percent for statewide elections, and 150 votes and one-fourth of one percent for non-statewide elections. The apparent winner and defeated opponent may select an alternative recount method if a manual recount is required.

Summary of Bill: The provision requiring a mandatory machine recount is removed. Manual recounts will still be required when the difference at a statewide primary or election for a statewide office is less than 1,000 votes and one-fourth of one percent or 150 votes and one-fourth of one percent for non-statewide offices.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The need for an intermediate mandatory machine recount should be eliminated. When an election is close enough to warrant a recount, the recount should be manual. Individuals can still request and pay for a machine recount under existing law.

Testimony Against: There should be transparency in recounts, and when a recount is required, voters should know that all ballots are counted.

Who Testified: PRO: Suzanne Sinclair and Bob Terwilliger, Washington Association of County Auditors.

CON: David Anderson, Your Vote Counts.