
HOUSE BILL 3276

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2006 Regular Session

By Representatives Darneille, Upthegrove, Kagi, Hunt, Nixon,
Hasegawa, Williams, Dickerson and Green

Read first time 01/31/2006. Referred to Committee on State
Government Operations & Accountability.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a task force to study voting rights and
2 restrictions of felons; creating new sections; and providing
3 expirations dates.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) The system for determining how, when, and where former felons
7 have their right to vote restored is contributing to uncertainty about
8 the validity of the election process, and local county clerks and
9 auditors find it impossible to access clear information about this
10 determination;

11 (b) Washington currently denies the right to vote to all persons
12 who have been convicted of an infamous crime and who have not fully
13 completed all conditions of their sentence, including full payment of
14 their legal financial obligations;

15 (c) Responsibility for monitoring compliance with the various
16 conditions of the sentence is placed at various times with the
17 department of corrections, the county clerk, and the sentencing judge;
18 and

1 (d) The current system for determining when the right to vote has
2 been restored takes away time from the other important duties of the
3 county clerks, county auditors, and secretary of state's staff.

4 (2) The legislature intends to study the issue of establishing a
5 standard for restricting and restoring the voting rights of felons that
6 will provide clear information about the status of former felon voting
7 rights to all state and local election officials.

8 (3) This section expires January 1, 2007.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A legislative task force to study
10 standards for restricting and restoring the voting rights of felons is
11 established.

12 (2) The task force members are as provided in this subsection:

13 (a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from each
14 of the two largest caucuses of the senate;

15 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
16 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
17 representatives;

18 (c) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
19 representatives jointly shall appoint members from each of the
20 following groups:

21 (i) One representative of county auditors;

22 (ii) One member of the association of superior court judges;

23 (iii) One defense attorney jointly designated by the Washington
24 defender association and the Washington association of criminal defense
25 lawyers;

26 (iv) One prosecutor designated by the Washington association of
27 prosecuting attorneys;

28 (v) One representative from a business or organization that
29 primarily serves multicultural or diversity interests;

30 (vi) One victims' advocate designated by the Washington coalition
31 of crime victims' advocates;

32 (vii) One representative from a business or organization that
33 represents the interests of low-income citizens;

34 (viii) One representative of an organization with expertise and an
35 interest in election reforms or voting rights issues;

36 (ix) One representative of an organization that represents the

1 interests of persons concerned with the effect of acquired
2 immunodeficiency syndrome on multicultural communities; and

3 (x) One representative of an organization that has expertise in
4 civil liberties;

5 (d) The secretary of state, or the secretary's designee; and

6 (e) A representative of the department of corrections.

7 (3) The task force shall choose its chair from among its
8 legislative membership. The member appointed from the largest caucus
9 of the house of representatives shall convene the initial meeting of
10 the task force.

11 (4) The task force must review the following issues:

12 (a) The current system for determining how, when, and where former
13 felons have their right to vote restored;

14 (b) The agencies and entities that are responsible for monitoring
15 compliance with the various conditions of a felon's sentence; how the
16 monitoring is performed and communicated to other agencies; how the
17 data is maintained and updated; and the fiscal impact of such
18 monitoring; and

19 (c) The need for establishing any changes and clearer standards as
20 it relates to the current system of restricting and restoring felon
21 voting rights and monitoring compliance with the conditions of a
22 felon's sentence.

23 (5) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by senate
24 committee services and the house of representatives office of program
25 research.

26 (6) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for
27 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
28 members, except those representing an employer or organization, are
29 entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW
30 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

31 (7) The expenses of the task force shall be paid jointly by the
32 senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are
33 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee
34 and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their
35 successor committees.

36 (8) The task force, where appropriate, may consult with individuals
37 from the public and private sector or ask such individuals to establish

1 an advisory committee. Members of such an advisory committee are not
2 entitled to reimbursement of expenses.

3 (9) The task force must report its findings and recommendations to
4 the appropriate committees of the legislature by October 30, 2006.

5 (10) This section expires January 1, 2007.

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