

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1526

As Passed House:
February 28, 2007

Title: An act relating to presidential primary ballots.

Brief Description: Modifying the form of the presidential primary ballot.

Sponsors: By Representatives Hunt, Chandler, Armstrong, Ormsby, Kenney, Linville and Moeller; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 2/6/07, 2/13/07 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/28/07, 97-0.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminates the unaffiliated ballot option for the presidential primary.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Green, Kretz, McDermott, Miloscia and Ormsby.

Staff: Colleen Kerr (786-7168).

Background:

Presidential primary ballots must be substantially the same as ballots for a partisan primary. A major political party may request a separate ballot, containing only the candidates of that party who have qualified, to be provided for voters who request a ballot of that party. A primary ballot containing the names of all candidates who have qualified for a place on the ballot must be provided for nonaffiliated voters. The unaffiliated ballot is provided for those voters who choose not to identify with either political party.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In a national presidential primary, the national political parties do not count unaffiliated ballots. The effect of this is those unaffiliated ballots cast for the presidential primary in Washington do not count in the national election.

Summary of Bill:

The presidential primary ballot must be consistent with the requirements for a consolidated ballot or a physically separate, one-party ballot, and the ballot must clearly indicate party affiliation of each candidate. There is no longer an unaffiliated ballot for the presidential primary.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This change to the statute will improve the information that goes before the voters. People who choose to use the unaffiliated ballot for the presidential primary do not realize that most of these ballots go uncounted in the presidential primary process. This proposed bill will allow people to only choose a Democratic or Republican ballot so that they may actually be able to participate in the national presidential primary. Additionally, this change will require the printing of fewer ballots, which is an expense born by the state.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Sam Reed and Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.