HOUSE BILL REPORT
SB 5119

As Reported by House Committee On:
Ways & Means

Title: An act relating to cancellation of the 2012 presidential primary.

Brief Description: Canceling the 2012 presidential primary.

Sponsors: Senators Pridemore and Kline; by request of Secretary of State and Governor Gregoire.

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
    Ways & Means: 4/13/11, 4/15/11 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Cancels the 2012 presidential primary.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Chandler, Cody, Dickerson, Haigh, Haler, Hinkle, Hudgins, Hunt, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Pettigrew, Schmick, Seaquist, Springer, Sullivan and Wilcox.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Parker.

Staff: Wendy Polzin (786-7137).

Background:

Historically, political parties in Washington selected their nominee for President and allocated their delegates to the national nominating conventions through party caucuses. In 1989 the Legislature approved an Initiative to the Legislature which established the presidential primary. The Secretary of State must conduct a primary each presidential

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election year to allow citizens the opportunity to express their preferences as to the major political party candidates for President. Following the primary, the state and county committees of each major political party are provided lists of voters who participated in their party's presidential primary.

The original legislation required delegates to the party national conventions to be allocated to each candidate for President based on the results of the preference primary. Votes cast for a particular presidential candidate were considered votes cast for delegate positions committed to that candidate. The selection of actual individuals as delegates remained a party function. In 1995 the Legislature amended the law to allow party delegates to be allocated in whole or in part based on the results of party precinct caucuses, rather than the preference primary. The 1995 legislation also requires the Office of the Secretary of State to amend its administrative rules to comply with the major political parties' national and state rules.

Presidential preference primaries were held in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2008. The 2004 presidential preference primary was cancelled. Unless the date is changed by statutory process, the presidential preference primary for the 2012 presidential election will be held on the fourth Tuesday in May, 2012.

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Summary of Bill:

No presidential primary may be held in 2012.

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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Cancellation of the presidential primary is assumed in the House of Representatives and Senate proposed budgets. The Secretary of State is a strong supporter of the primary, rather than caucuses, but is supportive of this legislation given the state's financial situation. The Democratic Party historically has not used results of the primary to nominate a candidate, and the Republican Party historically has only used a portion of the primary results to nominate a candidate. In 2012 only party caucuses will be used to nominate a presidential candidate. The legislation is moving late in session because an effort to reach agreement on using the primary results was in the works, but an agreement was not achieved.

(Opposed) None.

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

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.