

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6498

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2012

Title: An act relating to write-in voting.

Brief Description: Modifying write-in voting provisions.

Sponsors: Senator Swecker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/02/12 [DP, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 2/14/12, 27-21.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Prentice, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Chase and Nelson.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Benton.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: A person may file as a write-in candidate if the person is eligible to assume office, is not already on the ballot, and has not filed for the same office at the preceding primary. A Declaration of Write-in Candidacy must be received no later than the day prior to the primary or general election. Declarations of Write-in Candidacy forms are available from the county auditor, the Office of the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State's website.

Write-in votes for persons not filing a Declaration of Write-in Candidacy are also valid; however, it is more difficult determining the voter's intent without a declaration of candiacy.

Write-in voters are not tallied for the individual candidate, declared or undeclared, unless the sum of write-in, bland and over-voted responses for an office have the potential of changing the outcome of the primary or election.

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.

Summary of Bill: Any person who desires to be a write-in candidate and have such votes counted at a primary or election must file a Declaration of Write-in Candidacy no later than 18 days before the primary or election. Write-in votes for any person who has not filed a declaration of candidacy are not valid.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will require the counting of write-in votes only after a write-in candidate has filed 18 days prior to an election. This eliminates the need to count Mickey Mouse and other such names. This bill will save time and resources.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jerry Pettit, Kittitas County; Lori Augino, Pierce County Auditor's Office.