

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 1195

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Governmental Operations, April 3, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to candidate names on the primary ballot.

**Brief Description:** Concerning primaries.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Wylie, Buys, Hunt, Van De Wege, Appleton, Orwall, Ryu and Jinkins).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/07/13, 96-1.

**Committee Activity:** Governmental Operations: 3/19/13, 4/03/13 [DPA, w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Ranking Member; Conway, Fraser and Rivers.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Braun.

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

**Background:** The names of all candidates who file a declaration of candidacy will appear on the primary election ballot, with some exceptions. No primary election is held for any single position in any city, town, district, or district court if, after the last day allowed for candidates to withdraw, there are no more than two candidates who filed for the same position.

Additionally, if a special election is required in an odd-numbered year to fill a vacancy in any office that is scheduled to be voted upon for a full term in an even-numbered year, no primary election may be held for that office if no more than two candidates filed a declaration of candidacy.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments):** A primary election may be held in an odd-numbered year to fill a vacancy in any office that is scheduled to be voted upon for a full term in an even-numbered year regardless of how many candidates filed for the position. A

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*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.*

primary election must be held in all local races, regardless of how many candidates file for the position.

Return envelopes for primary and general election ballots must include prepaid postage. The state must reimburse counties for the cost of placing prepaid postage on mail and absentee ballots in primary and general elections.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments):** The prohibition on holding a primary election for any nonpartisan office if, after the last day allowed for candidates to withdraw, there are no more than two candidates filed for the position is removed.

A primary election must be held in all local races, regardless of how many candidates file for the position.

Return envelopes for primary and general election ballots must include prepaid postage. The state must reimburse counties for the cost of placing prepaid postage on mail and absentee ballots in primary and general elections.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Second Substitute House Bill:** PRO: Special rules on elections to fill off-year vacancies are inconvenient and not good for candidates getting to know the public. Community groups and media take a closer look at candidates if they appear on a primary ballot. Contributions are limited to half of what a regular race would be if there is no primary, and being able to raise more money makes it possible for new faces to get involved. The Secretary of State supports the bill because it provides net savings. County auditors are generally supportive of this bill, although the Secretary of State's savings put costs onto counties.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Wylie, prime sponsor; Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State; Monty Cobb, WA Assn. of County Officials.