

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6618

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Accountability & Reform, February 3, 2016

Title: An act relating to the voter fraud protection act.

Brief Description: Enacting the voter fraud protection act.

Sponsors: Senators Rivers and Litzow.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Accountability & Reform: 2/03/16, 2/03/16 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTABILITY & REFORM

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Miloscia, Chair; Padden, Vice Chair; Dansel.

Staff: Karen Barrett (786-7413)

Background: Candidates for elective office must file a declaration of candidacy in order to appear on the ballot. If the office is a federal or statewide office, a position in the state Legislature, the Court of Appeals, or a superior court district composed of multiple counties, the declaration must be filed with the Secretary of State. For all other offices, the declaration of candidacy must be filed with the county auditor. The filing period begins at the opening of business on the Monday two weeks before Memorial Day and ends at the close of business that Friday. It occurs the year in which the office is scheduled to be voted upon.

The action to withdraw candidacy for elective office follows a similar declarative process. A candidate withdraws their declaration of candidacy by filing a signed request with the same officer, whether the Secretary of State or county auditor. The period available to see that one's name does not appear on the ballot ends as business closes the Monday following close of the statutorily defined election filing period in May. Fixed dates to withdraw or declare candidacy appear in Title 29 of the Revised Code of Washington.

Summary of Bill: If an incumbent officeholder who has filed for re-election withdraws their declaration of candidacy, the filing period for that office is extended 72 hours after the close of business on the last day for candidates to withdraw their declaration of candidacy. And should another incumbent officeholder choose to file for the office being vacated,

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declarations of candidacy may be filed for that office holder's own office for an additional 72 hours.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: Voters will have fuller opportunity to select candidates. Concern that games may be played by parties and politicians when an incumbent withdraws after the filing period closed are averted. Prime sponsor is engaged with stakeholders this week, however, issues with bill as introduced are not yet resolved.

CON: County auditors are against the bill (as introduced) because it compresses time to prepare ballot for overseas' mailing particularly if more than one incumbent elected official files for an open seat.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Rivers, Prime Sponsor.

CON: Monty Cobb, Washington Association of County Officials (County Auditors).

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.