

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2459

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government, Elections & Information Technology

Title: An act relating to modifying gender references pertaining to major political party committees.

Brief Description: Modifying gender references pertaining to major political party committees.

Sponsors: Representatives Reeves, Robinson, Macri, Riccelli, Hudgins and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 1/19/18, 1/24/18 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands gender categories beyond male/female as it relates to the chairs and vice chairs of major political party committees, and the committee persons selected for state committees.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Appleton, Gregerson and Pellicciotti.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives McDonald, Ranking Minority Member; Kraft, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Irwin.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Johnson.

Staff: Desiree Omlie (786-7105).

Background:

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.

A major political party is a party whose nominees for president and vice president received at least 5 percent of the total votes cast at the last presidential election. Each major political party has a county central committee composed of the precinct committee officers of the party. The county central committee elects a chair and vice chair of opposite sexes. The county central committee elects one committeeman and one committeewoman to serve on the state party committee. The state party committee may call a state convention, elect delegates to the party's national convention, and nominate presidential electors. The state party committee must elect a chair and vice chair of opposite sexes.

The requirement that the chair and vice chair of the county central committee and the state party committee be persons of opposite sexes was added to the statute in 1943. The requirement that the county central committee elect one committeeman and one committeewoman to serve on the state party committee was also added to the statute in 1943.

Summary of Bill:

The chairs and vice chairs of the county central committee and the state party committee must be persons of different declared gender identity. The committee persons elected to serve on the state party committee must also be persons of different declared gender identity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) Historically, gender language needed to be inserted into statute to achieve gender equality. Requiring both genders maintained the balance between parties. If the gender requirement is removed, it could increase gender bias and could undo all the work that has been done to level the playing field. The bill does not require the parties to recognize a gender identity, but simply allows them to if they want to. It also only deals with major political parties. This body does not represent women or other genders fully, and this structure is necessary to move in the right direction.

People feel invisible and, when gender excludes people, it prevents them from participating. There was a point where language in statute was being updated to include women; now it needs to be updated again so that everyone feels seen.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Reeves, prime sponsor; Andrew Villeneuve, Northwest Progressive Institute; Tim Burns; and Melissa Taylor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.