

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5645

As Passed Senate, March 8, 2017

Title: An act relating to withdrawal of candidacy.

Brief Description: Concerning withdrawal of candidacy.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Senator Honeyford).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government: 2/15/17, 2/17/17 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 3/08/17, 49-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed First Substitute Bill

- Extends the candidate filing period for 72 hours if an incumbent officeholder withdraws their declaration of candidacy.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5645 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Miloscia, Chair; Zeiger, Vice Chair; Hunt, Ranking Minority Member; Kuderer and Pearson.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Candidates for elective office must file a declaration of candidacy in order to appear on the ballot. Candidates for statewide and federal offices must file their declarations with the Secretary of State, as must candidates in districts of multiple counties for appellate and superior courts and the state Legislature. For all other offices, the declaration of candidacy must be filed with the county auditor.

A filing fee is paid to the same officer with whom the declaration of candidacy is filed. For any office with a fixed annual salary of \$1,000 or less, the filing fee is \$10. For all other

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offices, the filing fee is 1 percent of the annual salary of the office. Candidates may submit petitions to have the filing fee waived.

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. A candidate can withdraw their declaration of candidacy by filing a signed request with the same officer with whom the declaration was filed. The period available to see that one's name does not appear on the ballot ends at the close of business hours on the Monday following the filing period.

Summary of Engrossed First Substitute 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This is a good government measure. There's a current oversight in our system that prevents parties from nominating or replacing a candidate who withdraws in the window after the filing period closes.

CON: This creates a cavalcade of filing periods that crunch time frames for ballot preparation and printing.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jim Honeyford, Prime Sponsor.

CON: Monty Cobb, WA Association of County Auditors.

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