
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2704

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By House State Government, Elections & Information Technology
(originally sponsored by Representatives Hudgins, Muri, and McBride)

READ FIRST TIME 01/30/18.

1 AN ACT Relating to election ballot space and voter informations;
2 amending RCW 29A.72.290, 29A.36.121, 29A.52.220, and 29A.32.121;
3 reenacting and amending RCW 29A.36.161; adding a new section to
4 chapter 29A.36 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an
5 expiration date.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that more and more
8 information is being placed directly on the ballot, making it more
9 complex. Careful management of space on each ballot will prevent the
10 need for multiple page ballots and the accompanying printing costs,
11 mailing costs, and voter return postage costs. Grouping partisan and
12 nonpartisan offices, transferring required information to other parts
13 of the mail ballot package, and streamlining ballot information will
14 promote efficient use of ballot space.

15 **Sec. 2.** RCW 29A.72.290 and 2013 c 11 s 76 are each amended to
16 read as follows:

17 The county auditor of each county shall print on the official
18 ballots for the election at which initiative and referendum measures
19 and measures for an advisory vote of the people are to be submitted
20 to the people for their approval or rejection, the serial numbers and

1 ballot titles certified by the secretary of state and the serial
2 numbers and short descriptions of measures for an advisory vote of
3 the people. They must appear under separate headings in the order of
4 the serial numbers as follows:

- 5 (1) Initiatives to the people;
- 6 (2) Referendum measures;
- 7 (3) Referendum bills;
- 8 (4) Initiatives to the legislature;
- 9 (5) Initiatives to the legislature and legislative alternatives;
- 10 (6) ~~((Advisory votes;~~
- 11 ~~(7))~~ Proposed constitutional amendments;
- 12 (7) Advisory votes.

13 **Sec. 3.** RCW 29A.36.161 and 2013 c 283 s 3 and 2013 c 11 s 44 are
14 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

15 (1) On the top of each ballot must be printed:
16 ~~((a))~~ Clear and concise instructions directing the voter how to
17 mark the ballot, including write-in votes ~~((; and~~

18 ~~(b) The following statement: "For a list of the people and~~
19 ~~organizations that donated to state and local candidates and ballot~~
20 ~~measure campaigns, visit www.pdc.wa.gov." The secretary of state may~~
21 ~~substitute such language as is necessary for accuracy and clarity and~~
22 ~~consistent with the intent of this section. Alternately, at the~~
23 ~~discretion of the county auditor or local election official, the~~
24 ~~statement required by this subsection (1)(b) may be printed in a~~
25 ~~prominent position on the ballot envelope and in the materials that~~
26 ~~accompany the ballot)).~~

27 (2) The ballot must have a clear delineation between the ballot
28 instructions and the first ballot measure or office through the use
29 of white space, illustration, shading, color, symbol, font size, or
30 bold type. The secretary of state shall establish standards for
31 ballot design and layout consistent with this section and RCW
32 29A.04.611.

33 (3) The questions of adopting constitutional amendments or any
34 other state measure authorized by law to be submitted to the voters
35 at that election must appear after the instructions and before any
36 offices.

37 (4) In a year that president and vice president appear on the
38 general election ballot, the names of candidates for president and

1 vice president for each political party must be grouped together with
2 a single response position for a voter to indicate his or her choice.

3 The major political party that received the highest number of
4 votes from the electors of this state for the office of president of
5 the United States at the last presidential election must appear
6 first. Other major political parties must follow according to the
7 votes cast for their nominees for president at the last presidential
8 election. Independent candidates and minor parties must follow major
9 parties and be listed in the order of their qualification with the
10 secretary of state.

11 **Sec. 4.** RCW 29A.36.121 and 2013 c 11 s 42 are each amended to
12 read as follows:

13 (1) The positions or offices on a primary consolidated ballot
14 shall be arranged in substantially the following order: United States
15 senator; United States representative; governor; lieutenant governor;
16 secretary of state; state treasurer; state auditor; attorney general;
17 commissioner of public lands; insurance commissioner; superintendent
18 of public instruction; (~~insurance commissioner~~) state senator;
19 state representative; county officers; justices of the supreme court;
20 judges of the court of appeals; judges of the superior court; and
21 judges of the district court. For all other jurisdictions on the
22 primary ballot, the offices in each jurisdiction shall be grouped
23 together and be in the order of the position numbers assigned to
24 those offices, if any.

25 (2) The order of the positions or offices on a general election
26 ballot shall be substantially the same as on a primary ballot except
27 that state ballot issues must be placed before all offices. The
28 offices of president and vice president of the United States shall
29 precede all other offices on a presidential election ballot. The
30 positions on a ballot to be assigned to ballot measures regarding
31 local units of government shall be established by the secretary of
32 state by rule.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 29A.36
34 RCW to read as follows:

35 The following statement shall be displayed in a prominent
36 position on the election page of each county web site, and printed in
37 at least one of the following: The ballot envelope, the materials
38 that accompany the ballot, or the voter pamphlet, if published: "For

1 a list of the people and organizations that donated to state and
2 local candidates and ballot measure campaigns, visit www.pdc.wa.gov."
3 The secretary of state may substitute the language as necessary for
4 accuracy and clarity and consistent with the intent of this section.

5 **Sec. 6.** RCW 29A.52.220 and 2013 c 195 s 1 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) No primary may be held for any single position in any
8 nonpartisan office if, after the last day allowed for candidates to
9 withdraw, there are no more than two candidates filed for the
10 position. The county auditor shall as soon as possible notify all the
11 candidates so affected that the office for which they filed will not
12 appear on the primary ballot.

13 (2) No primary may be held for the office of commissioner of a
14 park and recreation district, metropolitan park district, or for the
15 office of cemetery district commissioner.

16 (3) Names of candidates for offices that do not appear on the
17 primary ballot shall be printed upon the general election ballot in
18 the manner specified by RCW 29A.36.131.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) The secretary of state must conduct a
20 study to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of providing nonbinding
21 advisory votes on the ballot. The study should include a comparison
22 of the costs of preparing ballots in elections that include advisory
23 votes and elections where advisory votes do not appear on the ballot.
24 The study also should include an assessment of ballot design and
25 consider the cost savings of removing advisory votes from ballots.
26 The secretary of state must collect and analyze data and cost
27 information from all counties for the study.

28 (2) By December 1, 2018, the secretary of state must report to
29 the appropriate standing committees of the legislature on the study
30 authorized in this section. The report must include a summary and
31 analysis of the study, recommendations of ways to improve the
32 efficiency and cost-effectiveness of ballot production regarding the
33 use of advisory votes in elections, and possible alternative voting
34 methods for nonbinding ballot issues.

35 (3) This section expires July 1, 2019.

36 **Sec. 8.** RCW 29A.32.121 and 2004 c 271 s 168 are each amended to
37 read as follows:

1 (1) The maximum number of words for statements submitted by
2 candidates is as follows: State representative, (~~one hundred~~
3 ~~words;~~) state senator, judge of the superior court, judge of the
4 court of appeals, justice of the supreme court, and all state offices
5 voted upon throughout the state, except that of governor, two hundred
6 words; president and vice president, United States senator, United
7 States representative, and governor, three hundred words.

8 (2) Arguments written by committees under RCW 29A.32.060 may not
9 exceed two hundred fifty words in length.

10 (3) Rebuttal arguments written by committees may not exceed
11 seventy-five words in length.

12 (4) The secretary of state shall allocate space in the pamphlet
13 based on the number of candidates or nominees for each office.

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