

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5499

As of February 18, 2019

Title: An act relating to primary and general election voters' pamphlets.

Brief Description: Requiring the secretary of state to print and distribute a voters' pamphlet for the primary in each even-numbered year and for the general election every year.

Sponsors: Senators Kuderer, Zeiger, Hunt, Hasegawa, Keiser and Lias; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/15/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that the Secretary of State produce a voters' pamphlet for the primary election in each even-numbered year and for the general election every year.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The Secretary of State must print and distribute a voters' pamphlet to each household in the state, public libraries, and other locations the Secretary of State deems appropriate whenever a statewide ballot measure or office is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot. The voters' pamphlet may also be made available electronically. There is no requirement to print and distribute a voters' pamphlet for a primary election or a general election where no statewide ballot measure or office is scheduled to appear.

When printed, the voters' pamphlet must contain the following:

- information about ballot measures and advisory vote measures;
- candidate statements, if submitted;
- contact information for the Public Disclosure Commission;
- contact information for the major political parties;
- a statement explaining the amendatory style used in ballot measures; and

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- any additional information required by law or that the Secretary of State deems informative to voters.

Counties and cities may publish and distribute a local voters' pamphlet with information on ballot measures appearing within the jurisdiction if authorized by local ordinance including the text of measures and arguments supporting and opposing measures. The county or city may also specify in the ordinance that the local voters' pamphlet shall contain information on candidates for office.

Summary of Bill: The Secretary of State must print and distribute a voters' pamphlet for each general election, and for primary elections in even-numbered years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: PRO: The primary voters' pamphlet helps lesser-known candidates introduce themselves to the electorate. The pamphlet also acts as an instruction manual on how to register and update a voter registration, so we think this change will increase participation. Voters expect a pamphlet every year and it is very popular. This is a way of balancing costs between the state and counties.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Patty Kuderer, Prime Sponsor; Jay Jennings, Office of the Secretary of State.

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