
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

HB 2371

Brief Description: Clarifying the rules surrounding the removal of political advertising.

Sponsors: Representatives Cheney and Walen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Defines "lawfully placed" for purposes of the prohibition on removing political advertisements to specify that an advertisement is not lawfully placed if it remains in place past any legal deadline for removal.

Hearing Date: 1/23/24

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

It is a misdemeanor under state law to remove or deface a lawfully placed political advertisement, including yard signs or billboards, without authorization. Misdemeanors are punishable by imprisonment in county jail for up to 90 days and a fine of up to \$1,000.

It is illegal to place a temporary political sign within the right-of-way of a state highway. Rules adopted by the Washington State Department of Transportation regulate temporary political signs located along primary system highways (e.g. on private property) outside of incorporated cities or towns or commercial or industrial areas. These signs must be removed within 10 days after an election, except that signs for a candidate who is successful in a primary may remain up until 10 days after the general election. Some jurisdictions also have their own rules for the removal of political signs after an election. For instance, Pierce County also requires political signs to be removed within 10 days after an election, with the same exception for successful

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primary candidates.

Summary of Bill:

A definition of "lawfully placed" is added to the statute: political advertising is not lawfully placed if it remains in place past any deadline for removal provided by law.

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.