
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5225

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senate State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators MacEwen, Liiias, Nobles, Riccelli, and Shewmake)

READ FIRST TIME 02/13/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing clarity where candidates for the
2 same office have similar names; reenacting and amending RCW
3 29A.84.320; and adding a new section to chapter 29A.36 RCW.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.84.320 and 2003 c 111 s 2118 and 2003 c 53 s 177
6 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

7 A person is guilty of a class B felony punishable according to
8 chapter 9A.20 RCW who files a declaration of candidacy for any public
9 office of:

10 (1) A nonexistent or fictitious person; or

11 (2) The name of any person not his or her true name; or

12 (3) A name similar to that of an incumbent seeking reelection to
13 the same office with intent to confuse and mislead the electors by
14 taking advantage of the public reputation of the incumbent; or

15 (4) A surname similar to one who has already filed for the same
16 office, and whose political reputation is widely known, with intent
17 to confuse and mislead the electors by capitalizing on the public
18 reputation of the candidate (~~who had previously filed~~), regardless
19 of whether the declaration of candidacy is filed before or after such
20 person.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 29A.36
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 Whenever, in the judgment of the filing officer, two or more
4 candidates have filed for the same office whose names are so similar
5 as to be confusing to voters, the filing officer shall list such
6 candidates on the ballot in consecutive order and differentiate
7 between the candidates by the inclusion of additional information in
8 connection with the name as it appears on the ballot. Such
9 differentiation may be made by the inclusion of the candidate's
10 occupation, status as incumbent or challenger, or by any other means
11 which, in the judgment of the filing officer, fairly and impartially
12 distinguishes the candidates. The filing officer may solicit
13 suggestions and input from the candidates involved in order to
14 resolve the situation.

--- END ---