
SENATE BILL 5225

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators MacEwen, Lias, Nobles, Riccelli, and Shewmake

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1 AN ACT Relating to candidate filing requirements; amending RCW
2 29A.24.091; reenacting and amending RCW 29A.84.320; and adding a new
3 section to chapter 29A.36 RCW.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.24.091 and 2023 c 394 s 5 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section:

8 (a) A filing fee of ten dollars shall accompany the declaration
9 of candidacy for any office with a fixed annual salary of one
10 thousand dollars or less. A filing fee equal to one percent of the
11 annual salary of the office at the time of filing shall accompany the
12 declaration of candidacy for any office with a fixed annual salary of
13 more than one thousand dollars per annum. No filing fee need
14 accompany a declaration of candidacy for precinct committee officer
15 or any office for which compensation is on a per diem or per meeting
16 attended basis, or any declaration of candidacy for a write-in
17 candidate filed after the close of filing and more than eighteen days
18 prior to a primary or election.

19 ~~((2))~~ (b) A filing fee of twenty-five dollars shall accompany
20 the declaration of candidacy for write-in candidates for any office

1 with a fixed annual salary of one thousand dollars or less if filed
2 eighteen days or less prior to a primary or election.

3 ~~((3))~~ (c) A filing fee equal to one percent of the annual
4 salary of the office at the time of filing shall accompany a
5 declaration of candidacy for write-in candidates for any office with
6 a fixed annual salary of more than one thousand dollars per annum if
7 filed eighteen days or less prior to a primary or election.

8 (2) For candidates for statewide offices, United States senate,
9 United States house of representatives, and Washington state
10 legislature, half of the filing fee as described in subsection (1) of
11 this section must be provided upon filing and half of the filing fee
12 and the signature petition required under subsection (3) of this
13 section must be provided upon the conclusion of filing week as
14 designated under RCW 29A.24.050.

15 (3) (a) Candidates as described in subsection (2) of this section
16 shall submit with the candidate's declaration of candidacy a
17 signature petition as follows:

18 (i) For candidates for the Washington state legislature, the
19 petition must contain not less than 500 signatures;

20 (ii) For candidates for the United States house of
21 representatives, the petition must contain not less than 750
22 signatures; and

23 (iii) For candidates for statewide offices and the United States
24 senate, the petition must contain not less than 1,000 signatures.

25 (b) The signatures must be of voters registered to vote within
26 the jurisdiction of the office for which the candidate is filing.

27 (4) A candidate who lacks sufficient assets or income at the time
28 of filing to pay the filing fee required by this section shall submit
29 with the candidate's declaration of candidacy a filing fee petition.
30 The petition shall contain not less than a number of signatures of
31 registered voters equal to the number of dollars of the filing fee.
32 The signatures shall be of voters registered to vote within the
33 jurisdiction of the office for which the candidate is filing.

34 (5) The secretary of state may increase candidate filing fees by
35 rule in order to cover the expense of signature verifications as
36 required to comply with subsection (3) of this section.

37 **Sec. 2.** RCW 29A.84.320 and 2003 c 111 s 2118 and 2003 c 53 s 177
38 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

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

4 (1) A nonexistent or fictitious person; or

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

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

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

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 29A.36
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 Whenever, in the judgment of the filing officer, two or more
18 candidates have filed for the same office whose names are so similar
19 as to be confusing to voters, the filing officer shall list such
20 candidates on the ballot in consecutive order and differentiate
21 between the candidates by the inclusion of additional information in
22 connection with the name as it appears on the ballot. Such
23 differentiation may be made by the inclusion of the candidate's
24 occupation, status as incumbent or challenger, or by any other means
25 which, in the judgment of the filing officer, fairly and impartially
26 distinguishes the candidates. The filing officer may solicit
27 suggestions and input from the candidates involved in order to
28 resolve the situation.

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