



*Washington Secretary of State*

# CLEARINGHOUSE

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## ELECTIONS NOTICE

Issue #12-02  
April 18, 2012

### **Precinct Committee Officer Elections**

The Governor has signed [ESHB 1860](#) which once again places Precinct Committee Officers on the ballot. Elections for Precinct Committee Officer (PCO) will be conducted in the following manner:

#### PCO Candidate Filing

- Candidates for PCO must file during Candidate Filing Week. A separate Declaration of Candidacy [form](#) is used and available on the Secretary of State's website.
- Each precinct will have two positions open; one for the Democratic Party and one for the Republican Party. PCO candidates affiliate with a major political party when filing.
- There is no filing fee.
- Candidates may unintentionally list the wrong precinct on the PCO declaration. Because a PCO candidate only qualifies for the precinct in which he/she is registered, we recommend that the filing officer accept a PCO declaration as if submitted for the candidate's correct precinct. Please notify the candidate if a precinct is corrected.
- Candidates who file for PCO may also file for one other position on the ballot.
- If a PCO position is void at the close of Candidate Filing Week, that office is lapsed and is not placed on the ballot. The political party may fill the position by appointment. (RCW 29A.28.071)
- Special 3-day filing periods will not be held for PCO positions.
- If, after the last day to withdraw, only one candidate has filed for a party position, that candidate is considered elected immediately and the County Auditor must issue a certificate of election.
- Write-in candidates have been eliminated from PCO elections. A candidate cannot file as a declared write-in.

- The term of office for PCO is two years. There are no short term or unexpired term elections conducted for this office.

### Creating the Ballot

- PCO races appear on the even-year Primary ballot only.
- PCOs appear at the end of a regular ballot (a consolidated ballot) or on a physically separate ballot. The office must be clearly delineated from other offices on a consolidated ballot.
- The term of office and precinct name are not required to be listed.
- The following instructions must be included immediately above all PCO races: "In order to vote for precinct committee officer, a partisan office, you must affirm that you are a Democrat or a Republican and may vote only for one candidate from the party you select. Your vote for a candidate affirms your affiliation with the same party as the candidate. This preference is private and will not be matched to your name or shared."
- Only contested races appear on the ballot. For example, if two candidates file for a Democratic Party position, but only one candidate files for the Republican Party position, only the Democratic PCO race will appear on the ballot.
- When both party positions qualify to appear on the ballot, the order is determined by the statewide results of the last Presidential Election. For example, in 2012, all Democratic candidates are listed first and the Republican candidates follow.
- Candidate order **within** each party is determined by lot.
- A candidate's applicable party abbreviation is to be printed next to each candidate's name (see examples).
- Below **each** candidate, the following statement must be printed: "I affirm I am a Democrat" if the candidate is a Democrat; or "I affirm I am a Republican" if the candidate is a Republican. By voting for the candidate, this statement is an affirmation of the **voter's** party affiliation.
- A write-in line may not be printed on the ballot for PCO races.
- Sample ballots must include the office of PCO, but need not list the precinct positions separately or the candidates' names.

### Counting the Votes

- The voter may cast a vote for one candidate only. If votes are cast for more than one candidate, the race is overvoted and neither vote counts.
- Write-in votes must not be counted.
- There is no minimum requirement for the number of votes cast for a candidate.

- Contested PCO races are subject to recount laws.
- The candidate receiving the most votes in the Primary is elected. PCOs do not appear on the General Election ballot.
- Results for PCO races certify at the same time as other offices—14 days after the Primary.
- A certificate of election must be issued to anyone elected to a PCO position; procedures are determined by each county's policy.

## Ballot Examples

**For this office only:** In order to vote for precinct committee officer, a partisan office, you must affirm that you are a Democrat or a Republican and may vote only for one candidate from the party you select. Your vote for a candidate affirms your affiliation with the same party as the candidate. This preference is private and will not be matched to your name or shared.

Vote for one

- Jimmy Smith          Dem  
I affirm I am a Democrat
- Sue Thomas          Dem  
I affirm I am a Democrat
- Charlie Miller      Rep  
I affirm I am a Republican
- Jane Doe              Rep  
I affirm I am a Republican

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I affirm I am a Democrat
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