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Monty Mahan and Charlotte Garrido are two of the four candidates currently running for South Kitsap Commissioner.
Charlie Bermant

Port Orchard Independent

Democrats endorse Mahan by a hair

By Charlie Bermant | May 19, 2008

Kitsap County Democrats endorsed Monty Mahan in the race for South Kitsap Commissioner on Monday night, but he beat the closest opponent, Charlotte Garrido, by the equivalent of only six votes.

After the vote, Mahan said that "It feels good that the people in the party think that I will be a good candidate." Garrido called the result "disappointing" but said it would not change her strategy. "I have put a solid campaign together and have a lot of work in front of me," she said.

The vote represented a statistical dead heat, and demonstrated a desire for the contest to continue. About 70 Precinct Committee Officers (PCOs) were given weighted ballots, that determined the size of their constituency. This translated into 522 possible votes, making 262 the majority. Mahan earned 264, with Garrido polling 258.

A third candidate, Paul Nuchims, announced his intention to run for the seat at Monday's meeting and also addressed the group. He failed to gain a single vote, but said that his inability to get the party's endorsement would not affect his decision to run.

Nuchims, a member of the Kitsap County Art Board, said his platform included support for passenger ferries, more bike and pedestrian trails along major thoroughfares and a four year university.

Monday's action does not prevent those who did not receive the endorsement from running. It will allow Mahan to call himself the "approved" candidate in the voter's pamphlet and in advertisements.

"Charlotte has put in a lot of time with the party and this vote reflects this," Mahan said. "I didn't care much for this

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process. I think it was done too early, and should have occurred after the filing deadline. But it doesn't change my strategy, which is to appear on doorsteps in South Kitsap. It wouldn't have changed my strategy either way."

One of the options available to the party was to not make any endorsement at all, and allow the voters to decide without guidance. Garrido said she understood this option would be explored. Party official Jim Sommerhauser said he planned to bring that matter to the floor but "decided not to" at the last minute.

Mahan said that Garrido had the initial advantage with the PCOs due to her one term as South Kitsap Commissioner. However, he has chipped away at that advantage. Bremerton PCO Patricia Graf-Hoke, who did not say how she voted, said she appreciated how Mahan sent regular notes to the PCOs "but did not include a 'please remit' message every time."

These three Democrats, along with any other candidate that files by the June 6 deadline, will face off in the August 19 primary along with Republican Tim Matthes. After South Kitsap selects the top two candidates, they will meet in the Nov. 4 general election, in front of all Kitsap County voters.

Find this article at:

<http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/news/19092949.html>

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Published May 04, 2008

Campaign trail

Brad Shannon

Swecker to discuss flood aftermath

LACEY — State Sen. Dan Swecker is scheduled to talk Wednesday to the Panorama Republicans about the 2008 legislative session and the aftermath of the December floods in the 20th Legislative District.

Swecker, a Rochester resident, is the Republicans' ranking member on the Senate Transportation Committee and has served the district since an appointment in 1995.

The Panorama Republicans meeting is at 2 p.m. in the retirement community's Quinault auditorium. The public is invited regardless of political affiliation, and refreshments will be served. For more information, call Lee Wells Jr. at 360-438-5418.

District 35 Democrats to meet Saturday

BELFAIR — Next up for local Democrats having to take sides and "nominate" for the Aug. 19 primary election are the 35th Legislative District Democrats, who meet Saturday.

The convention is after the Democrats' quarterly meeting at 1 p.m. in the Theler Community Center in Belfair. Peter Goldmark, the Democratic candidate for lands commissioner, will be the featured speaker.

The nomination battle follows about 2:30 p.m., pitting Fred Finn and Daryl Daugs, two Democrats who would like to replace retiring 35th district Rep. William Eickmeyer. Rep. Kathy Haigh, the Democrat who holds the district's other House seat, has no in-party foe.

The nominating is part of a state Democratic Party strategy to preserve its legal rights to challenge the new top-two primary, which is being run for the first time after voters approved Initiative 872 in 2004. Court challenges delayed its taking effect.

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

May 27, 2010

GOP Senate field still wide

Only one Murray challenger withdraws because of Rossi run

Jim Camden
The Spokesman-Review

Tags: 2010 election 2010 Senate election Art Coday Clint Didier Craig Williams Dino Rossi Don Benton Ed Torres Paul Akers Sean Salazar U.S. Senate race



Rossi

Dino Rossi's long-expected entrance into the U.S. Senate race did not prompt a mass exodus by other Republican candidates Wednesday. Several said they welcomed competition with the former state senator who has been weighing the race for months.

Rossi, who announced his candidacy on the Internet early Wednesday, has statewide name recognition from two runs for governor and enters the race with the support of top Senate Republicans. But at least five active GOP candidates said they'll stick in the race.

That includes state Sen. Don Benton, of Vancouver, who has amassed a list of endorsements from GOP office holders, and former NFL player and Connell farmer Clint Didier, who was endorsed recently by Sarah Palin.

Voters will now have a choice between a "GOP established candidate or a citizen statesman who is a part of the grass-roots movement," Didier said in a news release after Rossi's 7 a.m. announcement was posted online.

Benton called Rossi a friend whom he will enjoy debating, while taking a shot at Rossi's Washington, D.C., establishment backing: "We can no longer look to the establishment to turn our economy and our country around. The people want an independent voice that will take on both parties and stand up for common sense and fiscal responsibility."

Sean Salazar, a Seattle chiropractor, offered to drop out months ago and support Rossi, spokeswoman Kandy Schendel said, but Rossi took too long to decide. Salazar is building a coalition among voters whom Rossi and some other Republicans ignore, such as Asian-Americans, African-Americans and Hispanics, she said. "He's not going anywhere. We've

put so much work into this campaign, the volunteers are saying 'You better not jump the race.' "

Craig Williams, a PacifiCorp energy trader and real estate broker from Vancouver, said he considers Rossi and all the other GOP candidates friends even though they're competing for the same seat. "Our focus is Patty Murray," he said. While Rossi and others court the far right, Williams said he'll seek support from a broader spectrum of Republicans, independents and Democrats in the top-two primary on Aug. 17.

"It's really not a primary; it's two general elections in a row," Williams said.

Skip Mercer, a Seattle physicist and professor at the University of Washington, likely will stay in the race but may run as an independent, said his wife, Lisa Mercer. Skip Mercer is on a ship in the Philippine Sea doing research and may not even know that Rossi is in the race, she said. He's due back Monday.

Paul Akers, a Bellingham businessman, is staying in the race, a spokesman said. He released a statement saying his expertise in "empowering people and eliminating wasteful spending" was what the nation needed.

Only one candidate who was in the race Tuesday said he was getting out because Rossi got in. Ed Torres, of Orting, a general superintendent for a plumbing firm, said he'll support Rossi.

Another, Art Coday, a Shoreline physician, is "still in a decision-making process," a spokesman said.

Get more news and information at Spokesman.com

Monday, Jun. 09, 2008

Deeper thoughts on the top two primary

A week ago I wondered aloud about whether candidates would sign up to run for office without listing a party preference because they believe the position they're running for should be nonpartisan or because listing their favored party would become a liability in the jurisdiction they're running in.

On Friday I got my answer. The Spokeman-Review's Rich Roesler reports that Spokane businessman Curt Fackler, chairman of the Spokane County Republican Party, filed to run for state insurance commissioner but did not list a party preference.

Why?

"I feel that insurance is a nonpartisan issue," Fackler told Roesler. "And on a statewide basis, I feel that having an R after your name isn't that advantageous. I'm not denying that I'm a Republican."

You can find Roesler's post [here](#).

It'll be interesting to see how voters react to this strategy, especially when Fackler is the only candidate in his race not listing a party preference. Certainly, some will be annoyed at not being provided whatever information, assumptions, perceptions and whatnot that could have been conveyed in one little letter.

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Spokane County GOP chairman files for office...as "no party preference"

Spokane businessman Curt Fackler filed last night to run again for Insurance Commissioner. As several other candidates around the state have done, Fackler listed no party preference.

But Fackler is the Spokane County GOP *chairman*.

Why not run as a Republican?

"I feel that insurance is a nonpartisan issue," he said. "And on a statewide basis, I feel that having an R after your name isn't that advantageous. I'm not denying that I'm a Republican."

Three people have filed for the seat: Democratic incumbent Mike Kreidler and Republican challenger John R. Adams.

Posted by Rich | 6 Jun 11:59 AM

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About Rich

Richard Roesler works as staff writer for The Spokesman-Review. In that position, Roesler covers Washington state news from our bureau in Olympia.



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Ballot Access News

Edited by Richard Winger

Washington State Primary Has No Function in 3/4ths of Legislative Races

June 8th, 2008

Washington state is using the "top-two" system for the first time this year. There are 26 State Senate seats up, and 98 State House seats up, for a total of 124 legislative races this year. Filing for the August 19 primary is now closed. Out of the 124 races, the primary is utterly meaningless in 92 races, since there are only two candidates, or only one candidate, running in 92 races.

Formerly, the Washington primary was the device by which major parties nominated their candidates, but it no longer has that function. Instead, the only function of the August 19 primary is to whittle down the number of candidates in the November election to just two. Obviously, when there are just two candidates (or just one candidate) in a particular race, there is no whittling to be done. In other words, in 74% of the legislative races this year, the primary will accomplish absolutely nothing.

Except for the gubernatorial race, there is no federal or state race this year in Washington with more than seven candidates. One wonders why the primary could not simply be canceled, so that all candidates who filed could run in November.

The total number of Democrats and Republicans running in this year's primary for legislature is 207. Two years ago, when the state was using an open primary, there were 233 Democrats and Republicans running for the legislature. Thus, it seems one effect of the "top-two" system has been to reduce choices for Democratic and Republican voters.

For counting purposes, any candidate who used the word "Democratic" or just "D" was counted as a Democrat, even if the candidate appended other words, such as "True Democrat" or "Progressive Democrat". Similarly, any candidate who used the term "G.O.P." was counted as a Republican, and also any candidate who used "Republican" with other words, such as "Republican Tax Cut" was also counted as a Republican.

5 Responses to "Washington State Primary Has No Function in 3/4ths of Legislative Races"

1. *Jim R Says:*
June 8th, 2008 at 11:24 pm

I think you may have miscounted.

In 2006, there were 187 House and 47 Senate candidates.
There 13 contested House primaries, and 5 Senate primaries.

In no cases were there contested primaries for both major parties. Since there were few or none truly contested congressional races, many voters could have picked their party based on which party was picking their legislative candidate in the primary.

There were 7 primaries that picked the loser in the general election. These may have been a result of mischievous cross-over voting, and/or the voters of a party picking a more extreme candidate.

In 2008, there are 209 House and 51 Senate R or D candidates. In addition there are 12 other (10 House, 2 Senate) candidates, either 3rd party or independent. There are 24 House primaries and 5 Senate primaries with more than one Democratic or Republican. In 27 of these races, there is only a single Democrat or Republican, so it is similar to 2006 in that regard. There are also 5 races featuring one D, one R, and one other candidate in the primary.

Overall, the number of races where a voter will actually be making a choice in the primary is up by 89%, and in every one of those races all voters will be able to participate - compared to 2006 when the voter had to first pick a party. Voters who consider themselves independent or non-partisan may be less likely to skip the primary. There is also more risk in mischievous cross-over voting.

A more complete analysis would also take into account open seats (Washington has term limits). For example in 2006 in LD 43, one House race had 6 Democrats, 1 Republican and 1 Progressive. The winner of the Democratic primary had 23% of the vote (only a bit over 5000 total). He easily won the general election with over 37,000 votes and this year faces no opposition (unless there are write-in challengers). On the other hand, in 2008, an open House seat in LD 14 has drawn 6 Republicans and 1 Democrat.

2. *will bates* Says:
[June 9th, 2008 at 7:23 am](#)

unless we have term limits all the incumbents will remain the turn over is low..

3. *Richard* Says:
[June 9th, 2008 at 9:27 am](#)

Jim R. says I may have miscounted. He says there were 234 legislative candidates in 2006, whereas I had said there were 233. If he is right and there were 234 instead of 233, that just makes my initial point stronger.

It will be interesting to see which primary has a higher turnout, the open primary of 2006, or the "top-two" primary of 2008. Obviously we will need to wait until August to see.

4. *David Ammons, secretary of state's office* Says:

June 9th, 2008 at 10:01 am

Thank you for your scholarship on the filings. We presume that filings will rise and fall depending on the number of good open seats. (The flurry in the 43rd LD last time was for an open House seat vacated by now-Sen. Ed Murray, for instance). For years, in one-party districts the race has been essentially settled in the primary. Now the conversation will continue until the November general, giving voters greater choice. The two most popular vote-getters, perhaps from the same party, will have to parse their differences and reach out to the party not represented in the general election. The general election always has a significantly higher turnout, and thus more voters will be involved in the final selection.

Both major parties have done an increasingly sophisticated job of pre-primary clearing the field for their favored candidate _ Rossi, McGavick and Nethercutt being recent Republican examples. This can continue to occur under Top 2. Our belief is that the parties and candidates will adjust seamlessly to the new system ___ and the voters will love it.

5. *Richard* Says:

June 9th, 2008 at 10:16 am

Thanks to David Ammons, from the Washington Secretary of State's office, for chiming in. I hope he will comment on what will happen if the Constitution Party member who is running for Auditor, Glenn Freeman, polls more than 5% of the vote in the August primary. Will that make the Constitution Party a fully-qualified party? If not, why not?

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Knue jumps into House race in District 10

Published: June 05, 2008 10:00:00 AM

Updated: June 06, 2008 7:22:54 AM

Tim Knue has filed as a candidate in the race for the Position 1, District 10 seat in the state House of Representatives, according to Island County elections staff.

Knue, a Democrat who unsuccessfully tried to unseat 10th District Rep. Barbara Bailey in the 2006 election, is challenging Republican Norma Smith for the House seat. Smith was appointed to the Position 1 seat earlier this year as a replacement for former Rep. Chris Strow.

In the Position 2, District 10 seat in the House, Ann McDonald has filed as a candidate.

McDonald joins fellow Democrat Patricia Terry in the race. Bailey is expected to file as a candidate in the race before the filing period ends on Friday. Bailey's entrance into the race will mean a three-way primary race in August, with the top two finishers advancing to the general election in November.

At least one primary race is already guaranteed; in the District 10 Senate race. Republican Linda Haddon, incumbent Democrat Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen, and America's Third Party candidate Sarah Hart are all in the running.

Find this article at:

<http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/news/19568274.html>

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Washington's 'Top-Two' Primary System Takes Effect

[WASHINGTON ELECTIONS](#)

By Amanda Loder

Spokane, WA June 2, 2008 9:28 a.m.

Even as political party bosses continue to fight the State of Washington in federal district court, a controversial new voting system is taking effect. Amanda Loder reports.

Monday is the first day political candidates can file under Washington's new "top-two" primary election system.

Candidates can register with any party without having a party nomination. So, primary voters don't have to commit to vote one party's ticket if they prefer, say, a Democratic candidate for Congress, and a Republican for Sheriff.

All candidates will show up on the same ballot. The two with the most votes, regardless of party, will move on to the

<http://news.opb.org/article/2231-washingtons-top-two-primary-system-takes-effect/>

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general election.

Secretary of State spokesman David Ammons says the new primary process will actually enfranchise more voters in traditional Republican and Democratic Party strongholds.

David Ammons: "If you're in downtown Seattle, you're going to pick the winner, essentially, in the primary, so the November election, when you have far more voters turning-out, is rather meaningless. Top two will continue the conversation clear into November, and it will allow a larger number of voters to pick their favorite."

There are a few, basic rules for candidates filing under this new system.

Any party name they choose will be listed on the ballot as long as it falls under character limits, doesn't include profanity, and doesn't reveal whether they're endorsed by a local party.

Ammons says the Secretary of State hopes they won't list themselves as "Anti-war Dem" or "Pro-life GOP," but there's nothing in the rules preventing it.

Ammons also acknowledges that, in districts that heavily favor one party, for example, Republican, there's nothing keeping a Democrat from showing up on the ballot as a Republican to try to win the primary.

The only primary elections that won't be affected by the new top-two system are presidential. Democrats and Republicans in Washington will continue to nominate their presidential candidates under the old primary-caucus system according to party rules in future election cycles.

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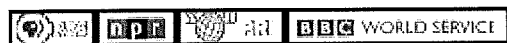
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Herrera files to retain 18th District seat

By Tony Lystra

State Rep. Jaime Herrera, who was appointed to her 18th District seat in November, announced Wednesday that she had filed to fight for her seat in November's election.

She faces Democrat Vanessa Duplessie, of La Center, who officially entered the race Monday.

Herrera, a Ridgefield Republican, was picked last year to replace Rep. Richard Curtis, who resigned in the midst of a sex scandal.

The 18th District includes Kalama, Woodland, Toutle and Castle Rock and northern Clark County.

Candidates throughout the region are filing this week for August's primary and November's general election. Wednesday was otherwise quiet, with no new candidates filing in Cowlitz or Lewis counties, according to elections officials.

In Wahkiakum County, Lisa Marsyla, a Democrat, filed for the District 1 commissioner's race Wednesday. She will run against Bill Coons, who filed Tuesday. Commissioner George Trott, who currently occupies the District 1 Seat, has yet to file.

Democrat Wayne Flohr also filed Wednesday to run against Wahkiakum County commissioner Dan Cothren. Cothren is registered as an Independent.



The Whidbey **Examiner**

News from the Heart of Whidbey Island

Friday, June 06, 2008

Candidate filing deadline is Friday, June 6

Friday, June 06, 2008

Washington's first "top-two" election season opened Monday with a smooth launch of filing week across the state.

Secretary of State Sam Reed, who had urged "no funny business" when candidates express their political party preference on their official filing, said state and local election officials reported strong compliance. Candidates had 16 letters to describe their party preference and nearly all were signing up as Democrats or Republicans, leaving any adjectives or further political messages to their campaigns and the official voters' guides. A few filed as independents by expressing no party preference.

Although most candidates have been campaigning for months and have filed financial reports with the Public Disclosure Commission, the official filing with the Secretary of State or county auditor is necessary to gain a place on the Aug. 19 primary ballot.

Under the new system created by the voters and recently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, candidates declare their party preference. They pay a filing fee equal to 1 percent of one year's salary for the office sought.

The two candidates with the most primary votes for each office will advance to the November general election, regardless of party preference. The political parties have the option of holding nominating conventions to anoint their favored candidate for each office. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling and the voter-approved People's Choice Initiative 872 did not authorize information about the party nods to appear on the ballot itself. The information may be used in campaign materials and in the voters' guides.

The new top-two system is considered a "winnowing" primary to narrow the field to two finalists for each office. Previously, it was a nominating primary that chose the November nominees for the major parties. It's possible that primary voters will advance two people from the same party to the November election for some offices.

"I'm pleased that we're off to a good start with filing week as we get ready for an intriguing new election system in the state of Washington," Reed said Monday. "I'm convinced that voters will really like this new system, which will allow people to vote for the person, not the party."

"Washington has a long and rich tradition of voter independence and carefully weighing their best choices for each and every office. Ticket-splitting is part of our heritage and people jealously guard their choices and their privacy."

Filing week runs through today, Friday, June 6. Candidates for Congress, statewide office such as governor, and legislative and judicial districts that cross county lines must file with the Secretary of State. Candidates for legislative and judicial seats within Island County may file with the Secretary of State or with the Island County Auditor's Office. All other offices, including party precinct committee officers, must file with the county auditor.

Local candidates have until 4:30 p.m. Friday, June 6 to complete and file their declarations of candidacy and pay their filing fees at the Island County Auditor's Office, 1 NE Sixth St., in Coupeville. Declarations not filed in person by the candidate must be notarized.

Any candidate who has already filed but wishes to withdraw his or her candidacy must do so in writing by June 12. All filling fees are nonrefundable.

The Secretary of State also offers the convenience of online filing at www.secstate.wa.gov. Online filings will be accepted until 4 p.m. on Friday, June 6.

<http://www.whidbeyexaminer.com/print.asp?ArticleID=1439&SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1>

6/6/2008

Filing fees for offices with annual salaries of \$1,000 or more are 1 percent. For example, it costs \$1,652 to file for the U.S. House, \$1636.18 to run for governor, and \$418.80 to run for the Legislature. Indigent candidates may submit voter signatures at a rate of one per each dollar of the filing fee.

The filing period is earlier than usual, following the Legislature's decision to move the primary forward about a month in order to allow more time between the primary and general elections.

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Monday, Jun. 02, 2008

Deep thoughts on filing week and the top two primary

It may be that I'm the only one wondering this but...

The state's new primary rules as drawn up by the Secretary of State's Office do not require candidates to list a party preference. And that leads me to wonder whether some candidates would actually decline to do so, perhaps in even greater numbers than those who filed as independents under the old system.

Why would they do that? There's been a push from time to time to make some offices, such as state treasurer and county sheriff, nonpartisan. And, without the force of law behind them requiring it, candidates for those offices could take a stand by not listing a party affiliation when they sign up.

Another reason to not list a party affiliation is strategy. Having a "D" behind your name in Eastern Washington can be a campaign killer. Same thing with having an "R" behind your name in Seattle.

This question is partly based on the premise that filing without listing a party affiliation is different than filing as an independent under the old system.

By declaring themselves an independent a candidate would be declaring themselves unaffiliated with any party. But by not listing a party preference under the new system candidates would simply be saying "I'm not telling."

Secretary of State Sam Reed said while it's possible more candidates will decide against listing a party preference than those who filed as independents before doing so presents some risks.

"We could see that happening," he said. "What offsets that quite a bit is by indicating Democrat or Republican you pick up a little bit of a base. It gives you a start."

He also suggested that those that don't list a party preference might not be taken seriously by voters. And voters might see right through the motives for candidates who have a track record of aligning themselves with a particular party.

"It can have an impact on voters sense of trust," he said.

Reed, a Republican, said some have suggested he should run without the GOP label after taking heat from his own party for his handling of the 2004 gubernatorial election.

"I couldn't do it," he said. "I'm just too much of a hard-wired Republican."

I also asked Benton County Sheriff Larry Taylor about it. He's chaired the legislative committee for the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs for the last eight years and earlier this decade pressed for legislation that would make his office nonpartisan.

"Partisan politics should not play a role in the administration of justice," said Taylor, a former Democrat turned Republican.

But he said he'll probably continue to list a Republican Party affiliation.

"If it affected everybody across the board, that would be one thing," he said.

But challengers could run against him with party labels and support while he'd risk sending a message he's shunning his party.

"I think that would reflect negatively upon you," he said. "You're reflecting a sort of personal defiance against the party that has supported you all along."

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May, 29, 2008

ELECTIONS

State's top-two primary debated

Official says it fits state's heritage; Dem argues it's confusing, not open

SAM TAYLOR

BELLINGHAM — The state's new top-two primary system will give voters "unrestricted" choice in selecting their elected leaders, said Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed Wednesday.

"It just fits our (state) political heritage and our political culture to have this freedom," Reed told a crowd at the Bellingham City Club.

But Whatcom County Democrats Chairwoman Natalie McClendon disagreed, saying the new system is confusing people and not allowing for open access and selection of candidates by voters.

The top-two system nearly makes party preference obsolete on the ballot, with only the two candidates with the most votes being sent from the primary to the general election. That means two Democrats could be on the ballot, or two Republicans.

The change has been on the minds of many active in local political parties, who are scrambling to figure out the best way to retain their own candidates' chances after the U.S. Supreme Court recently validated the system.

Voters approved the top-two primary with Initiative 872 in 2004, after political parties in the state challenged the state's blanket primary, which had been in place since the 1930s.

The top-two primary was Reed's and other state officials' answer to the challenge, but the measure was quickly attacked again by the parties.

Democrats in the 40th Legislative District, which includes the lower half of Whatcom County, especially are concerned that their five state Senate candidates may end up splitting votes and putting the one Republican and lone independent in the race on the general election ballot.

McClendon Wednesday took issue with what she said was Reed posing the issue as a "people versus party process and that somehow parties aren't made up of people."

"Parties are for people who share political values and goals to make the sum greater than the part," she said, "not this monolithic power out there. I just live on C Street, ya know?"

Reed told the group that various focus groups, presentations and polling indicate that Washingtonians "are ready and understand" the new system. He also pointed out that about three-fourths of people in Washington historically have split their ballots between various candidates not of the same party, both in primaries and in general elections.

"I think they're going to be delighted," he said.

Reach Sam Taylor at sam.taylor@bellinghamherald.com or call 715-2263.



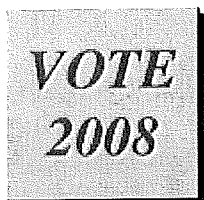
PORT TOWNSEND & JEFFERSON COUNTY LEADER

Wednesday, June 04, 2008

The race has begun!: Competition for PUD, BOCC

Allison Arthur

Wednesday, June 04, 2008



Kenneth McMillen, a 21-year veteran Jefferson County Public Utility District 1 commissioner, has tossed his hat into the race for that six-year position.

Election filing week began Monday and continues through Friday around the state.

In Jefferson County, McMillen's entry into the race was the only unexpected event so far.

"It looks like there are some exciting times coming up with Puget Sound Energy probably being sold and dramatic increases. I should be able to put my experiences with the PUD to good use," McMillen said yesterday.

Jim Pivarnik, who had announced his intentions to run several weeks ago, filed Monday for the No. 2 position incumbent Kelly Hays said he didn't want to keep.

McMillen had wanted to keep the job six years ago. He was defeated by David Sullivan, who then resigned to run for a seat on the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners. Hays was chosen to fill Sullivan's seat, then ran for the remainder of that term and won. The annual salary for the PUD seat is \$8,400.

County commission

County Commissioners Phil Johnson and David Sullivan, both Democrats, filed Monday morning to retain their jobs, which now pay \$58,032 a year.

Republican Dennis Schultz filed against Johnson for the District 1 (Port Townsend) seat. Independent Sandy Hershelman is challenging Sullivan for the District 2 seat.

County commission candidates must pay a \$580.32 filing fee.

Jefferson County Superior Court incumbent judge Craddock Verser also filed Monday to retain his job for the next four years. It pays \$140,979 a year.

State rep seats

In the Legislature, Rep. Kevin Van De Wege, a Sequim Democrat, filed to keep his seat in the 24th District. Thomas Thomas, a Republican from Port Angeles, has announced he intends to run, but as of Tuesday afternoon had not filed, according to the Secretary of State's website.

Rep. Lynn Kessler, a Democrat from Hoquiam, filed Monday to retain her seat. Robert Randall "Randy" Dutton, a Republican from

Montesano, has announced he will challenge Kessler, but had not filed as of Tuesday afternoon.

Sen. Jim Hargrove, a Democrat from Hoquiam, filed to retain his seat. As of Tuesday, no one else had filed information with the state for that seat.

Members of both the House and Senate earn \$41,280 a year. Senators' terms are for four years, and representatives serve two years.

Congress

For Congress, U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks, a Democrat who lists Belfair as his hometown, filed to keep his seat, and Doug Cloud, a Republican, filed to challenge him. It will be Cloud's third run against Dicks. Cloud received 31 percent of the vote in 2004 and garnered 29.4 percent of the votes cast in 2006, according to the Secretary of State's election results.

Top-two primary

This election marks the return of Washington's "top-two" primary. Under the new system created by the voters and recently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, candidates declare their party preference. The two candidates with the most primary votes for each office advance to the November general election, regardless of party preference, according to the Secretary of State.

The new top-two system is considering a "winnowing" primary to narrow the field to two finalists for each office. Previously, it was a nominating primary that chose the November nominees for the major parties. It's possible that primary voters will advance two people from the same party to the November election for some offices.

In past elections, if no one from a major party filed to run for a contested office by the end of filing week, the parties had a week to find a candidate to put on the ballot. That option has been removed in a new top-two primary system.

Party preference will not be listed on the ballots.

Electronic filings can be made through the state's website at www.secstate.wa.gov. Filings are accepted until 4 p.m. Friday, June 6.

The primary is Aug. 19 and, like most counties, Jefferson County voters cast ballots by mail.

The general election is Nov. 4.

Related Links

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John White

From: Murphy, Patty [pmurphy@secstate.wa.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2008 8:32 AM
To: Elections - Cert & Training
Cc: Miller, Paul
Subject: Hart & ES&S PCO

Team,

The PCO contest for both Hart and ES&S can be accomplished with a 2 page ballot, or 2 elections. Most of the ES&S counties I talked with yesterday (Westside & Spokane) will **not** be hand counting. They will probably be setting up two elections, and using two AutoMARKs per site. (TH & SP have an AutoMARK capacity problem with the AutoMARK memory cards – and would probably have to split up the election anyway. They will check to make sure it will work with this split for 2 AutoMARKs – they usually split by precinct.) I'll see the Eastside ES&S counties tomorrow – I would guess they'll opt for hand counting.

Please consider giving the following options for the AVUs –

- 1) Two AVUs are used to vote two ballots.
- 2) If the PCO is hand counted, the AVU will be set up as a separate election with the PCO contest at the end. The votes will be duplicated onto the central count ballot and the hand count ballot.

NOTE – Can you okay that for the AVUs only that the PCO contest could be the last contest, and not a 'separate page'? Since a blind voter wouldn't know the difference anyway – having the PCO at the end of the ballot for AutoMARKs would be preferable so the voter wouldn't have to insert two ballots. The DREs might not matter.

Thanks,

Patty Murphy

Voting Systems Support
Office of the Secretary of State
(360) 902-4188
PO Box 40229
520 Union Ave NE
Olympia, WA 98504
pmurphy@secstate.wa.gov

From: Lichtenheld, Peter [mailto:PLichtenheld@hartic.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2008 9:53 PM
To: Murphy, Patty
Subject: RE: Missed you

Patty,
OK - we have LOTS of options for the PCO contest. The thing is, it is very doable and does not require hand counting. I think that the Hart counties could collaborate and come up with a variety of solutions. We would contribute as much, or as little, as you'd like.

Peter Lichtenheld
Director of Operations, Elections
Hart InterCivic
512.252.6578 (office)
866.275.4278 (support)
512.252.6905 (efax)

www.hartintercivic.com

6/2/2008

From: Murphy, Patty [mailto:pmurphy@secstate.wa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2008 8:29 PM
To: Lichtenheld, Peter
Subject: RE: Missed you

Thanks Peter.

Yes, the top two Primary is basically an open primary, and the PCO contest is really two contests run for two different organizations - and it's really their generals. To avoid needing a pick a party box, we are putting all the candidates under the same contest - grouped by party - and when a voter votes for one candidate, that is their party affiliation statement. (As you know we don't register voters by party.)

I like your idea of two separate databases. For the eSlates, the county would either need two machines for this, or they'd need to make another election with all races on it, and then they could dup any votes onto the other two ballots. Since we have so few voters on the eSlates, either would work.

Regarding 2 page ballots - no - I don't believe it happens very often.

Patty Murphy
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360.902.4188 fax 360.664.4619
pmurphy@secstate.wa.gov

From: Lichtenheld, Peter [mailto:PLichtenheld@hartic.com]
Sent: Mon 4/28/2008 8:19 PM
To: Murphy, Patty
Subject: RE: Missed you

Patty,
OK, I'll send you my schedule on Wed this week and I'll see you next week.

We don't have an issue with a 2 page ballot. There are additional procedures the counties should follow with 2 page ballots, but I think they've probably dealt with those before, right?

One way to deal with the PCO is as an entirely separate database. Another is to force a page break in the same database.

Question - it seems that the Top Two Primary is basically an Open Primary. The PCO contest, however, IS party affiliated (correct me if I am wrong here). So, can any voter, regardless of their party affiliation, vote for any PCO candidate, regardless of that candidate's affiliation?

Peter Lichtenheld
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From: Murphy, Patty [mailto:pmurphy@secstate.wa.gov]
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2008 8:18 PM
To: Lichtenheld, Peter
Subject: Missed you

Hi Pete,

I haven't been able to connect via phone – sorry. Regarding next week, I'll be at all the WEI presentations, so should be able to see you before or after one of those. I should also be at one of the Dupont trainings on May 6th – probably the morning session.

Regarding the PCO race – I'm forwarding the latest info. from our C&T group. One question I have for you – does Hart have an issue tabulating a 2 page ballot? Specifically, if only one page is returned – is it a problem?

Hope to see you next week!

Thanks,

Patty Murphy
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520 Union Ave NE
Olympia, WA 98504
pmurphy@secstate.wa.gov

6/2/2008

John White

From: Nieland, Libby [lnieland@secstate.wa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:30 PM
To: Campbell, Miriam
Subject: FW: Kitsap County comments on PCO

From: Dolores Gilmore [mailto:Dgilmore@co.kitsap.wa.us]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2008 9:02 AM
To: Nieland, Libby
Subject: Re: Kitsap County comments on PCO

Hi Libby,

I have to gather information regarding specific costs and issues for the 3 different scenarios for separating PCO's to a separate ballot page (program two separate elections, a two page ballot, and a paper ballot to be hand counted)

We will get back to you soon,

<lnieland@secstate.wa.gov> 4/28/2008 4:02 PM >>>

Comments on PCO's from Delores Gilmore

Can't we create special verbiage with a colored heading on the regular Primary ballots to identify the PCO's as a separate issue instead?

This is a horrible idea. Multiple ballots would be a disaster for the system because they would have to be manually counted. This would force us to hand counting tens of thousands of ballots. Because our readers only read ballot stock of the same size in a single election, if we had to go to separate ballots, we would have to use same size stock to read mechanically. This would be very expensive.

This would greatly increase the cost of the election. We would have to create separate insert, separate ballots, dedicate a vast amount of time to manually separate, review and count the ballots. It would also increase postage cost and cost to voters for return postage.

We create a ballot type for each precinct. Add a office is no problem, but creating a different ballot. We can't work this with the ballot readers. If we created two databases, and managed the two ballots as separate elections, we could use the same tabulators, but it would be very complex to switch back and forth. There would be great wear and tear on machines

We would be implementing a completely new process at the time of record turnout. Scrutiny of the political parties will be intense for this primary, yet we won't have counting processes in place or tested.

Estimated return for PCO's would be 40% of the total ballots. No room in Kitsap for counting additional ballots, staff and storage.

This addition makes everything so complicated, that it is jeopardizing the integrity of the election. How do we achieve accountability? What about reconciliation? Do we just ignore the PCO ballots?

If we can't handle it, then let the Top Two Primary go down. This is a way to lose the trust of the voters. This is because the attorneys don't understand the process, but they are only focused on defending the TTP, If they understood how close the election process is, would you still recommend that we add an additional ballot and hand count the PCO, would you still recommend this procedure.

6/2/2008

Libby Nieland
Certification and Training
Elections Division
Office of the Secretary of State
520 Union Ave. SE
Olympia, 98504-0229
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Fax 360.664.4619

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E-Mail: dgilmore@co.kitsap.wa.us

John White

From: Moss, Sheryl [shmoss@secstate.wa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2008 9:04 AM
To: Murphy, Patty; Blinn, Katie; Buckles, Tracy; Campbell, Miriam; Duncan, Samantha; Nieland, Libby; Ramsay, Kay
Subject: FW: Precinct Committee Officer Elections

FYI

From: Sally Andrews [mailto:bbfprinting@qwestoffice.net]

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2008 5:52 PM

To: Moss, Sheryl

Cc: Eunice Coker Whitman County; Debbie Hooper Whitman County; Katrin Manning Walla Walla County; Karen Martin Walla Walla County; Diane Tischer Wahkiakum County; Beverly Lamm Stevens County; David O'brien Skamania County; Doris Schaller San Juan; LKrizenesky Pend O; Pat Gardner Pacific County; Mila Jury Okanogan County; Susan Blankenship Mason County; Karen Herr Mason County; Amber Cervantes Mason County; Mariann Zumbuhl Lewis; Brenda Sorenson Klickitat County; Michele Reagan Island County; Loann Gulick Island County; Sue Ramaker Grant; Faith Anderson Grant County;; Bill Varney Grant County;; Peggy Laughery Garfield County;; Donna Deal Garfield County;; Dianna Galvan Ferry County; Thad Duvall Douglas County; Pat Pennington Douglas County; Marty Whitehall Douglas County; Sharon Richter Columbia County; Naedene Shearer Columbia County; Shoona Radon Clallam County; Patty Rosand Clallam County; Susie Christopher Benton County; Stuart Holmes Benton County; Elaine Johnston Asotin County; Nancy McBroom Adams County; Heidi Hunt Adams County

Subject: Re: Precinct Committee Officer Elections

Hi Sheryl

If it is helpful to you on the Hart system it can accomodate two page ballots but it would be much better for the Counties if they create two data bases. One for the top two & one for the PCO's (I am assuming they can do a consolidated ballot for the PCO's.) This has several advantages. If the voter only returns one of the pages it will not confuse the data base if it was a two page ballot. Also, I suspect the fall primary will need to be on an 8-1/2 X 14 ballot & the PCO's would only need to be on an 8-1/2 X 11 ballot. A savings on both the printing & mailing costs. This means both ballots could be machine readable. I really do not think anyone except perhaps the very small Counties really want to count the PCO's by hand.

As we are having ES & S training this week I am sure we can find out the best way for that system to handle this.

Sally
 BBF PRINTING

----- Original Message -----

From: Moss, Sheryl

To: ADAMS - Heidi Hunt ; ASOTIN - Elaine Johnston (Auditor) ; BENTON - Brenda Chilton ; BENTON - Stuart Holmes ; BENTON - Susie Christopher ; CHELAN - Nissa Burger ; CHELAN - Skip Moore ; CHELAN - Stephanie Wilder ; CLALLAM - Julie Ridgway ; CLALLAM - Shannon Cosgrove ; CLALLAM - Shoona Radon ; CLARK - Tim Likness ; CLARK - Tom Godkin ; COLUMBIA - Naedene Shearer ; COWLITZ - Ameer Paxton ; COWLITZ - Carolyn Myers ; DOUGLAS - Marty Whitehall ; DOUGLAS - Pat Pennington ; DOUGLAS - Priscilla Navares ; FERRY - Liz Stinson ; FRANKLIN - Diana Killian ; GARFIELD - Peggy Laughery ; GRANT - Faith Anderson ; GRANT - Sally Andrews ; GRAYS HARBOR - Helen Bensinger ; GRAYS HARBOR - Julie Murphy ; ISLAND - Anne LaCour ; ISLAND - LoAnn Gulick ; ISLAND - Michele Reagan ; JEFFERSON - Betty Johnson ; JEFFERSON - Karen Cartmel ; KING - Bill Huennekens ; KING - Bobbie Egan ; KING - Christine Rudolph ; KING - Harry Sanders ; KING - Jacqueline Timmons ; KING - Janice Case ; KING - Laird Hall ; KING - Rene LeBeau ; KING - Sandy McConnell ; KING - Sheril Huff ; KITSAP - Dolores Gilmore ; KITTITAS - Sue Higginbotham ; KLICKITAT - Brandie Sullivan ; KLICKITAT - Connie Kayser ; KLICKITAT - Pam Pimley ; LEWIS - Beth Rosbach ; LEWIS - Heather Borts ; LEWIS - Mariann Zumbuhl ; LINCOLN - Dale Vaughan ; LINCOLN - Tina Brown ; MASON - Amber Cervantes ; OKANOGAN - Joesph MacLean ; OKANOGAN - Mila Jury ; PACIFIC - Chris Stephens ; PEND OREILLE - Liz Krezinsky ; PEND OREILLE - Tina Olson ; PIERCE - Lori Augino ; PIERCE - Mike Rooney ; SAN JUAN - Carlys Allen ; SAN JUAN - Doris Schaller ; SKAGIT - Casey Earles ; SKAGIT - David Cunningham ; SKAGIT - Margaret Enders ; SKAMANIA - David O'Brien ; SKAMANIA - Heidi Penner ; SNOHOMISH - Carolyn Ableman ; SNOHOMISH - Cindy Gobel ; SNOHOMISH - Garth Fell ; SNOHOMISH - Joe Smith ; SNOHOMISH - Michelle Smith ; SNOHOMISH - Wendy Mauch ; SPOKANE - Kit Anderson ; SPOKANE - Kris Forgey-Haynie ; SPOKANE - Mike McLaughlin ; SPOKANE - Paul Brandt ; STEVENS - Beverly Lamm ; THURSTON - Carrie Wack ;

6/2/2008

THURSTON - Lynnette Thornton ; THURSTON - Steve Homan ; THURSTON - Tillie Naputi-Pullar ; THURSTON (VR) - Keith Mullen ; WAHKIAKUM - Diane Tischer (Auditor) ; WAHKIAKUM - Karen Fleming ; WALLA WALLA - Debbie Benavides ; WALLA WALLA - Katrina Manning ; WALLA WALLA - Pam Hamilton ; WHATCOM - Carolyn Duim ; WHATCOM - Debbie Adelstein ; WHATCOM - Ethel Heyrend ; WHATCOM - Pete Griffin ; WHATCOM - Travis Butcher ; WHITMAN - Debbie Hooper ; YAKIMA - Diana Soules ; YAKIMA - Kathy Fisher

Cc: Elections - All

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2008 5:28 PM

Subject: Precinct Committee Officer Elections

Dear Election Partners:

On Friday, our staff called each County Auditor to notify each county of a decision to require a physically separate ballot for the precinct committee officer races.

From a legal standpoint, including precinct committee officers on the Top Two Primary ballot could cause voter confusion. PCOs are party offices that are treated differently from other partisan offices in this primary. To emphasize the difference between PCOs and other offices, the Attorney General's Office has recommended that a separate ballot be required.

We are currently writing the WACs regarding PCO elections and would appreciate any feedback you have to offer. We are keeping track of your questions/comments and will be addressing them, where possible. We are fairly certain that you will have the choice of whether to count the ballots by hand or by machine. Other than the separate ballot requirement, ways to ease the administrative burden of these elections are being explored.

We are working hard to have solid information to give to you during training next week. Your continued support and understanding are very much appreciated.

Please feel free to contact anyone in Certification and Training with questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Moss
Office of the Secretary of State

6/2/2008

John White

From: Moss, Sheryl [shmoss@secstate.wa.gov]
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2008 4:07 PM
To: Blinn, Katie; Buckles, Tracy; Campbell, Miriam; Duncan, Samantha; Nieland, Libby; Ramsay, Kay
Subject: TOP TWO PRIMARY TRAINING ANSWERS
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged
Attachments: TOP TWO PRIMARY TRAINING ANSWERS.doc

I reviewed the questions/comments from the first Top Two training we did. About half were not actually questions to be answered.

This document may be helpful for the presentations next week. Tracy, you may want to use some for the Q&A you are working on.

Attached is a list of the actual questions and answers. Some have citations; others do not require citations.

6/2/2008

TOP TWO PRIMARY TRAINING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. There were several questions on PCO elections, which will be addressed in upcoming WACs
2. Consistency in the ballot inserts was requested. *WAC 434-250-040 provides the specific language to be used.*
3. How will the Presidential candidates be handled in the General? *WAC 434-230-110*
4. Does the Top Two Primary apply to federal/Congressional candidates? Yes. *WAC 434-230-055*
5. Will there be a key on the ballot for the Presidential race? *No. WAC 434-230-110*
6. How will results appear? *A WAC may be needed to address this.*
7. If someone claims they're the "nominee" in the voters' pamphlet, is that our concern? *No. The candidate may claim to be endorsed or nominated by a party in their voter pamphlet statement. You should not be checking for accuracy of any candidate statements in the voters' pamphlet.*
8. Do the primary rules apply to charter counties? *Yes, unless it is specifically addressed in the charter.*
9. Do the primary rules apply to nonpartisan and judicial offices? *No, nonpartisan and judicial offices have not changed.*
10. How many characters will be allowed for party designation? *16. WAC 434-215-120*
11. Will there be a standard script to use for voter education? *Working on it.*
12. Will there be funds available to pay for county outreach efforts? *No.*
13. Is listing the party preference for a candidate on a second line an option? *No. WAC 434-230-045*
14. Please clarify write-in procedures for the Primary. *WAC 434-262-160*
15. Will PDC rules change? *Unknown at this time.*
16. Will the primary affect voter intent issues? *No.*
17. Do we still have major political parties? *Yes, however this may change with 2009 legislation.*
18. How does this affect the roles of party observers? *For this year, the role of observers is unchanged.*
19. Has the definition of a major political party changed? *No.*
20. Do political parties need to register? *No, however that may be addressed in future legislation.*
21. Request defensible ballot instructions that aren't confusing to voters. *Additional required instructions are found in WAC 434-230-015.*
22. Will additional inserts increase postal costs? *Possibly. Check with your post office or mailing service to verify.*
23. What about candidates which hint or state a party designation? *Candidates may not use a nickname that denotes the candidate's position on issues or political party affiliation.*

John White

From: Duncan, Samantha [sduncan@secstate.wa.gov]
Sent: Friday, April 25, 2008 3:28 PM
To: Campbell, Miriam; Nieland, Libby
Subject: FW: help with a project

FYI – I've asked Tracy to take this piece over.

Samantha Duncan

Office of the Secretary of State
Certification and Training Program
360-725-5771
sduncan@secstate.wa.gov

From: Duncan, Samantha
Sent: Friday, April 25, 2008 3:27 PM
To: Buckles, Tracy
Cc: Moss, Sheryl
Subject: help with a project

Hey Tracy –

I thought of something that would be really great if you could do for us (it's on my list but there's no way in Houston I'll get around to it before the training.)

We want to provide the counties with 3 things:

- ◆ An FAQ on the Top Two for their voters and additionally for their own use (probably two lists)
- ◆ A document of standardized responses to voter questions about the Top Two that they can use when they answer the phones
- ◆ A clear statement about our position on the Top Two – the message about the Top Two that we really want to get through to the voters

The first FAQ would be pretty easy since its mostly already done and on the web. I don't know what all we would want to add for the administrators own use, probably the questions we've been receiving most from the counties themselves

For the standardized responses and statement/message on the Top Two, it will have to go through communications. I'm sure we could draw something up and run it by them for the responses, but I'm not sure how to get the statement. Maybe Joanie can help.

Anyway, it would be awesome if you could take over on this. The counties were pretty clear in the Pres. Primary debrief sessions that they didn't feel like we supported them during all that, and these were items they suggested would have supported them better.

Thanks – have a good weekend! Hope your back feels better.

Samantha Duncan

Office of the Secretary of State
Certification and Training Program
360-725-5771
sduncan@secstate.wa.gov

6/2/2008

John White

From: Campbell, Miriam [mcampbell@secstate.wa.gov]

Sent: Friday, April 25, 2008 12:36 PM

To: Elections - Cert & Training

Subject: County Questions re: PCO Elections

As per our morning meeting, we're collecting specific questions, concerns, and ideas from County Auditors as we phone them about PCO elections.

The questions are compiled on the C&T drive, including Spokane's concerns (#8, #9) here: Z:\Top Two Primary

Miriam Campbell

Certification & Training Program

Tel: (360) 902-4165

Fax: (360) 664-4619

6/2/2008

John White**From:** Blinn, Katie [kblinn@secstate.wa.gov]**Sent:** Thursday, April 24, 2008 3:57 PM**To:** Elections - Cert & Training; Miller, Paul; Murphy, Patty; Aust, Erika; Motz, David; Kasselmann, Russell; Guerrero, Lori**Subject:** FW: Washington's New Primary System

You should probably be aware that I sent the below email to the elected Auditors this morning. I have received many positive responses.

From: Blinn, Katie**Sent:** Thursday, April 24, 2008 8:25 AM

To: ADAMS - Nancy McBroom ; ASOTIN - Elaine Johnston; BENTON - Bobbie Gagner; CHELAN - Evelyn Arnold ; CLALLÁM - Patty Rosand; CLARK - Greg Kimsey; COLUMBIA - Sharon Richter ; COWLITZ - Kristina Swanson ; DOUGLAS - Thad Duvall ; FERRY - Dianna Galvan; FRANKLIN - Zona Lenhart ; GARFIELD - Donna Deal ; GRANT - Bill Varney; GRAYS HARBOR - Vern Spatz ; ISLAND - Sheilah Crider; JEFFERSON - Donna Eldridge; KING - Sherril Huff; KITSAP - Walter E. Washington; KITTITAS - Jerry Pettit; KLINKITAT - Brenda Sorensen; LEWIS - Gary Zandell ; LINCOLN - Shelly Johnston; MASON - Karen Herr; OKANOGAN - Laurie Thomas; PACIFIC - Pat Gardner ; PEND OREILLE - Marianne Nichols; PIERCE - Pat McCarthy ; SAN JUAN - Milene Henley; SKAGIT - Jeanne Youngquist; SKAMANIA - J. Michael Garvison ; SNOHOMISH - Carolyn Diepenbrock; SPOKANE - Vicky Dalton ; STEVENS - Tim Gray ; THURSTON - Kim Wyman ; WAHIAKUM - Diane Tischer; WALLA WALLA - Karen Martin ; WHATCOM - Shirley Forslof; WHITMAN - Eunice Coker ; YAKIMA - Corky Mattingly

Cc: Reed, Sam (Office); Hamlin, Shane; Moss, Sheryl**Subject:** Washington's New Primary System

Dear County Auditors,

Late last night, I read the very thoughtful email string regarding the draft rules. I am happy to see so many people engaged in this discussion.

Voters in Washington do not register by party and proudly reject the notion of following party line. People in Washington want to vote for the candidate, not the party. The Pick-a-Party Primary forced voters to vote for the party. If a person wanted to vote for a democrat for Governor, the person was forced to vote for a democrat for all of the other partisan races. If a person wanted to vote for a republican for Congress, the person was forced to only vote for republicans for the other races. The voters loudly and strongly rejected this restriction.

The political theory behind a Top Two Primary is to place the focus back on the candidates, not the parties. Under a Top Two system, candidates are running as individual candidates, not as representatives of any political party. Most voters don't care whether the primary is to "nominate" the democrat or republican who goes on to the General. Rather, most voters want the opportunity to answer the real question: For each race, who is the best candidate?

Ensuring that the Top Two Primary is not simply a Blanket Primary in disguise is absolutely vital. The U.S. Supreme Court has afforded us the opportunity to give it a try, to see if we can pull it off. But this means that every element of this system is up for examination and reassessment. Doing things the way they were done under the Blanket Primary or the Pick-a-Party Primary is not an option. Doing things a particular way because that is what we are accustomed to doing is not an option. If we are having difficulty changing our mindset, voters will too. We must make the fact that this is an entirely different election system extremely obvious, both for ourselves and for voters. This point cannot be missed.

~~We are implementing a system that contradicts the primary election used in every other state. We are creating a new system from scratch. Consequently, we must approach this from the perspective that we are starting from the beginning. We cannot handle a task one way or another simply because that is the way it was done in the past. That is not to say that we won't consider how well or poorly things have worked in the past. But we cannot assume that information will be displayed or processed as it has in the past. It is because the political parties are continuing to sue us, and because this system has never been tested, that every aspect of it will be under tremendous scrutiny.~~

These lawsuits contend that government is violating constitutional rights. There is plenty of established caselaw criticizing government for interfering with constitutional rights. One consistent response from the courts in these types of cases is: **Administrative inconvenience is no excuse.** This response may seem inconsiderate of the significant challenges faced by

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administrators, but I am confident that we will come up with solutions that balance the interests of the voters, the legal defense of the system, and logistical limitations.

I know that we are all very motivated to make this new system sound enough to survive the many court challenges ahead. But creating a sound, defensible election system will require significant change. The Secretary of State's Office and the Attorney General's Office are spending, literally, hours and hours thinking, discussing and rehashing very fine details of this system. For example: What do particular words consciously or subconsciously imply? How does "Independent" differ from "Prefers No Party" which differs from "States No Party Preference" which differs from "No Party Preference" and so on? We have conducted a focus group and have consulted with many of you on many of these issues. I am thinking about the implementation details as soon as I wake up, as I drive to work, all day at work, as I drive home, and when I wake up at 2:00 am. And I am very worried.

We are not going to think of every area that could be the subject of a legal challenge. And we are not going to come up with a perfect solution for every weakness in the system. But please know that we are giving many of these issues tremendous thought. Where we are deviating from past practice, we are doing so because it is necessary. We want to have the opportunity to conduct a Top Two Primary this year and into the future.

I am asking for your continued support as we develop this new system. Yes, there is going to be change. But this change will benefit our voters. They are going to love this primary and we are very excited!

Sincerely,

Katie Blinn

6/2/2008

John White

From: Nieland, Libby [lnieland@secstate.wa.gov]
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2007 12:08 PM
To: Blinn, Katie; Buckles, Tracy; Elections - Cert & Training
Subject: RE: Candidate Filing Form

Thank you Katie,

You are, of course, correct. I will be sure to point out the tenuousness of the election process to the PDC. I still feel both departments will benefit by communicating and planning as early as possible.

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From: Blinn, Katie
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2007 8:39 AM
To: Nieland, Libby; Buckles, Tracy; Elections - Cert & Training
Subject: RE: Candidate Filing Form

I think it is a good idea to meet with the PDC. But I would keep in mind three things related to candidate filing that might change before June 2008:

- The Legislature might tinker with the process for minor party and independent candidates to file for office.
- The Legislature might tinker (at our request) where candidates in single-county state offices file for office.
- The U.S. Supreme Court might change our form of primary.

I guess this is a long way of saying, don't set anything in stone just yet. But I guess that is normal procedure in our line of work these days! ☺

From: Nieland, Libby
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2007 3:19 PM
To: Buckles, Tracy; Blinn, Katie; Elections - Cert & Training
Subject: RE: Candidate Filing Form

Good Afternoon,

It was my intention to meet with the PDC before the end of the year. The agenda will include discussion of changes in the Declaration of Candidacy forms. Spokane County has requested that the form contain a line to indicate how the candidate's ballot name should be pronounced. Considering that counties are responsible for the audio in DAU's, I think it is a fine idea.

Isn't possible to stop including an exact sample of the Declaration of Candidacy in the WAC and merely list the items that must be on it?

I will let everyone know the time and date of the meeting with the PDC.

6/2/2008

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From: Buckles, Tracy
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2007 7:07 AM
To: Blinn, Katie; Elections - Cert & Training
Subject: RE: Candidate Filing Form

I can't think of anything unless we get back the top two primary. Is there anything that would have to change then?

From: Blinn, Katie
Sent: Tue 10/9/2007 5:18 PM
To: Elections - Cert & Training
Subject: FW: Candidate Filing Form

I just missed Libby. Does anyone know if we are planning to make other changes to the Declaration of Candidacy form prior to the 2008 filing period?

From: Blinn, Katie
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2007 5:17 PM
To: Nieland, Libby
Cc: Neilson, Tami
Subject: Candidate Filing Form

Libby,

A few months ago, it was pointed out to us by a legislative staffer that our RCWs and Declaration of Candidacy could be more clear (or accurate) for Congressional races. According to the U.S. Constitution, a candidate for Congress does not actually have to live in the district he is running for. He only has to live in the state.

We attempted to fix the RCW in a bill last year, but the bill died. We can still fix it in the Declaration of Candidacy, which is codified in WAC 434-215-012. But I am realizing that this is fairly complicated because we don't just list the text of the Declaration in the WAC, but actually provide a picture of the form: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=434-215-012>

And doesn't the PDC approve the form before we finalize it? Do you think we will be making any other changes to the form before the 2008 candidate filing period? If so, I am wondering if we should hold off on this WAC change until the next round of rulemaking. If we don't plan to make other changes to the form, we might as well go ahead and make the change now, because rulemaking takes about six months.

Any thoughts are welcome. Thanks!

Katie

6/2/2008