

THE MODIFIED BLANKET PRIMARY

a tradition of independence



The 2004 Primary

Office of the Secretary of State
February 2004

The Problem:

The United States Supreme Court may or may not choose to hear Washington's blanket primary appeal. Should the Court decline to hear the case, Washington's blanket primary will be unconstitutional. To prepare, the 2004 Legislature must create an alternative primary system. Otherwise Washington may not hold a primary at all in 2004. Without a primary system in place, all candidates advance to a chaotic general election ballot. The result could be an election similar to the recent recall election in California.

Secretary of State Sam Reed's Proposal:

Reed advocates a qualifying (modified blanket) primary because it best serves Washington voters.

- **Described.** In a qualifying (modified blanket) primary, voters may select any candidate on the ballot. The top two vote-getters advance to the general election. On rare occasions, two candidates of the same political party may advance to the November ballot.
- **Constitutional.** This approach is constitutional.
- **Every Vote Counts.** All voters participate in the primary.
- **Voter Privacy.** The qualifying (modified blanket) primary fully protects voter privacy.
- **Voter Choice.** Voter choice is protected. All candidates share one ballot and citizens may vote for the person regardless of political party affiliation.
- **Administratively Workable.** The qualifying (modified blanket) primary is workable and similar to the 5,000 elections held every odd-numbered year in Washington. Voters are familiar with this kind of election. Election administrators have years of experience and the equipment to run such a primary.