

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia, Washington

Bill Analysis

Bill No. SSB 5640

Studying primary elections and speeding up.

Brief title

Hearing Date 3/30/99

Senator Gardner and McCaslin

Sponsor(s)

Staff Steve Lundin

State Government Committee

Phone 786-7127

BACKGROUND:

A primary election nominating caucus held the earliest in the history of the state on a general election on the seventh day prior to a general election.

A three-member county canvassing board in each county canvasses and certifies election results. The canvassing board must be completed and the results must be certified fifteen days after a general election and ten days after a special election primary.

SUMMARY:

A temporary task force is established to make recommendations on the timing of primary elections, canvassing boards, and certification of election results. The task force consists of 3 members as follows:

- Five members are jointly appointed by the secretary of state, president of the Senate, and co-speaker of the House of Representatives.
- The president of the Senate appoints two members of the Senate, one from each of the two largest caucuses.
- The co-speaker of the House of Representatives appoints two members of the House, one from each of the two largest caucuses.
- The secretary of state designee.
- One county election official designated by the Association of County Officials.
- A representative of each major political party in the state appointed by the chair of the Party Central Committee.

The task force must report its recommendations to the Governor, Secretary of State and appropriate standing committees of the Senate and House of Representatives on or before December 31, 1999. The task force terminates on December 31, 1999.

The county auditor must convene the county canvassing board to process absentee ballots and canvass votes at least every third day after special election, primary general election and before certification of the election results. Absentee ballots that have not been canvassed but have been canvassed by the canvassing board when it is convened if the absentee ballot was:

- Received by the county auditor on or before the day before the convening of the canvassing board and
- Either was returned before the closing of the polls bears a date of mailing before the election for which it was issued.

Results of the tabulation must be made public immediately after the completion of the canvass.

FISCAL NOTE: Not requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which it is passed.