



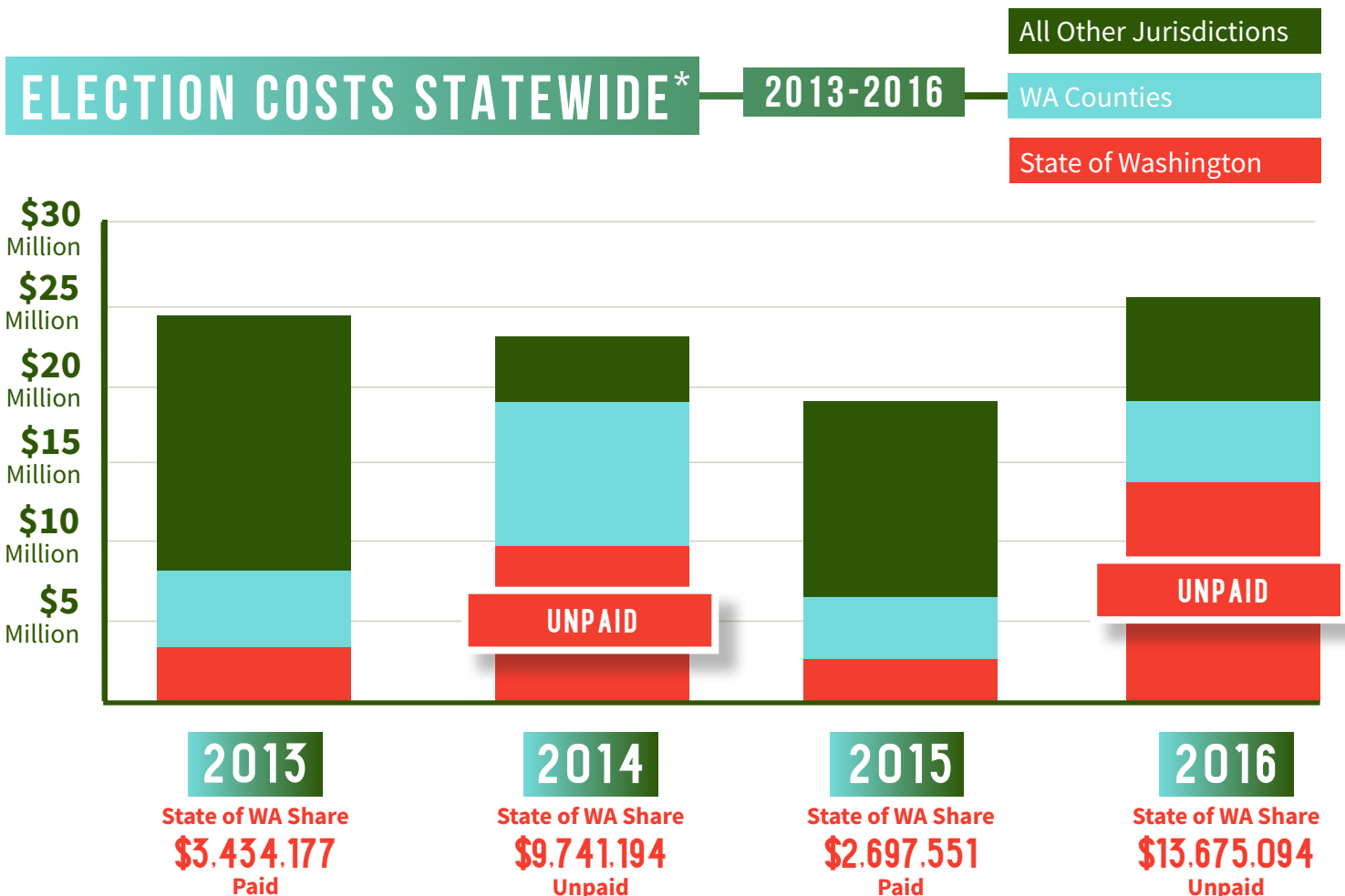
2020 SESSION LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

FAIR SHARE ELECTION FUNDING

AN ACT RELATING TO STATE REIMBURSEMENT OF ELECTION COSTS.

This proposal asks the State to pay a proportionate share of elections and recounts, just as local jurisdictions and districts do. Currently, the State only pays its share of costs in odd years. This bill would extend the requirement for state payment of election costs to odd and even years.

Counties bill direct and indirect election costs to jurisdictions using the BARS Manual and accounting guidelines from the State Auditor's Office. The State is the only jurisdiction that doesn't pay its proportionate share in even years. When the State doesn't pay, state costs are absorbed by each county.



*Wahkiakum County only provided General Election data.

ELIMINATE MARRIAGE WAITING PERIOD

Currently there is a statutory three day waiting period after a marriage license is issued before the marriage may be solemnized. Washington State is one of only 19 states requiring a waiting period, and of those three have options for couples to circumvent the waiting period.

The three day waiting period results in:

- Confusion for customers; many are unaware that a waiting period is required.
- Hardship for couples who want or need to legalize the marriage contract immediately. This is particularly difficult for military personnel who are facing deployment and for applicants who are dying.
- Turning away customers who planned a “destination” marriage, particularly in Seattle. Because many of these travelers are from other states or countries, they are not aware of the waiting period

This proposal eliminates the three-day waiting period for marriage solemnization and provides the option for Auditors to perform marriage ceremonies.

MODIFY PRECINCT BOUNDARIES

This bill streamlines election precinct management and provides a common-sense approach to the changing of precinct boundaries.

Precinct boundaries need to be changed when city/town annexations and other district boundaries change. Boundaries are also changed to respond to growth in areas where the number of registered voters exceeds 1,500.

This bill:

- Allows county auditors to propose needed adjustments to precinct boundaries; it codifies a practice that is currently taking place in most counties. Auditors are closest to and most knowledgeable about precinct requirements.
- Sets forth a 45-day window for the county legislative authority to hold a hearing and to formally reject or modify the proposed changes.
- Changes the deadline to make changes from 14 days to 7 days before the start of candidate filing week. This addresses the current problem of the 14-day deadline sometimes conflicting with the certification of the April election because the Auditor cannot make precinct changes during an active election.

OTHER POLICY POSITIONS

1 2 3

Ranked Choice Voting and Other Alternative Voting Methods

Auditors can support new balloting methods when properly resourced with state funding, when adequate, affordable, certified technology is available, and when there is sufficient time to plan implementation. Adequate time and money for voter education is also critically important.

Auditors strongly prefer uniform, statewide election law. Local options need to recognize County Auditors as the responsible election administrators.



Election Audits

RCW 29A.60.170 (3) mandates “A random check of the ballot counting equipment . . .” prior to Certification. Washington’s election results are highly accurate and there is no indication that tabulation equipment is not reliable. Mandatory and requested recounts regularly prove this point. Our efforts are better directed toward reducing public skepticism pertaining to the privacy, accuracy, and singularity of voter registration.

If the legislature believes it’s important to pass an audit bill, Auditors recommend bolstering the existing audit requirement with a deeper or more specific sample size. NOTE: Additional pre-certification audits will slow ballot processing.



Ballot Drop Boxes

Auditors support the use of Ballot Drop Boxes, which continue to play an important role even with pre-paid postage. Boxes allow last-minute voters to confidently cast a ballot on election day without the risk of being received too late to count. However, the prescriptive siting mandated by SSB 5472 has created box placements that are not beneficial to voters. Census-designated places are the most problematic. Auditors ask for siting requirements to be waived, while maintaining a threshold of 30,000 registered voters per box.



Primary Election

Auditors support pushing the August Primary Election to a spring date. In conjunction with an earlier Primary Election, Auditors recommend elimination of the April Special Election.



Abolish Torrens

Torrens is a complex, labor intensive system of land registration separate from standard recording systems. Only 5 counties are required to report Torrens parcels to the state. Modern methods of recording and preserving documents are well established and provide a superior method for maintaining title and preserving public record. County Auditors support abolishing Torrens at the state level and allowing affected counties to move their properties in registration to their regular recording system



Eliminate Advisory Votes

On the 2019 General Election ballot, voters were faced with twelve non-binding advisory votes. These measures only served to confuse voters, increase the cost of elections, and overshadow the measures and candidate races that make a tangible impact on our citizens’ lives.



ABOUT WSACA

WSACA is the Washington State Association of County Auditors, an affiliate of the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO). WSACA's 39-county membership represents recognized experts and trusted professionals in the areas of elections, licensing, recording and finance. County Auditors (including the elected and appointed counterparts of King County) meet throughout the year to discuss issues of public policy and to exchange best practices.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Auditors "Hill Day"

Tuesday, February 4, 2020
Recording, Licensing, Elections
WSACA on Capitol Campus

WACO Day on the Hill

Wednesday, February 5, 2020
WSACA on Capitol Campus

Annual Conference

May 4-6, 2020
Tacoma, Washington

Washington State Election Conference

June 23 - 26, 2020
Spokane, Washington

