



2022

SESSION LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

MAIN PRIORITIES



End Torrens – HB 1376

Torrens is a complex, labor intensive system of land registration separate from standard recording systems. Only a small number of parcels in 5 counties are registered in the Torrens method. Modern methods of recording and preserving documents are well established and provide a superior method for maintaining land title and preserving public record. County Auditors strongly support passing HB 1376 to end the antiquated Torrens system and allow affected counties to move all properties to their regular recording system.



Statewide Standards for Voters' Pamphlets – HB 1453

With all counties now producing a local voters' pamphlets in each election, the standards and rules for voters' pamphlets should be made consistent across the state.

Currently, each county has their own policies around statement deadlines and what is and isn't acceptable in a candidate statement. This patchwork of rules makes it difficult for candidates running in jurisdictions that cross county lines as they work to track multiple deadlines and format styles. County Auditors and the Office of Secretary of State have proposed changes to RCW to create consistency across all voters' pamphlets statewide in HB 1453 and urge passage.



Vote Center Clean-up

County Auditors ask the legislature to clarify vote center hours during election periods, as well as prohibit electioneering within 100 feet of the entrance to a vote center.

Recent vote center legislation resulted in the requirement that every county operate a vote center until 8 p.m. on all election dates, even if that county is not holding an election. County Auditors want to end mandated vote centers for special elections if the county is not holding an election.

State law currently prohibits electioneering inside a vote center. The law is silent about electioneering near the entrance to the center. Washington may be the only state in the country that fails to prohibit electioneering within a specified distance of in person voting locations.

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OTHER POLICY POSITIONS



Safeguard Voter Security and Privacy

Auditors support applying the same exemption standards that are already currently applied to voter registration records to ballots, declarations, and voting materials.

Keeping voter signatures and contact information exempt from disclosure is necessary for voter privacy as well as the security of our elections. However, state law is currently unclear on whether signatures and contact information can be disclosed from ballots and other voting materials. This information is exempt from disclosure when it comes to a voter registration record and that exemption should be consistent across the board to ensure the highest level of integrity in our elections.



Ballot Drop Boxes

Convenient, secure, and accessible, ballot drop boxes allow voters to drop their ballot off and drop boxes remain popular, even with prepaid postage. However, the prescriptive siting mandated in 2017 has created location requirements that are simply not serving voters and seem to defy common sense. These include small, gated communities as well as communities that are within two miles of another drop box. Siting decisions should be driven by the needs of the voters in each county, and the current requirements prioritize census designations over the real-life experience of voters.



Primary Election

Auditors are open to moving the August Primary to a spring date. However, with the many moving pieces that make up the existing elections calendar, the details and dates related to this legislation truly matter. The Auditors seek to work closely with the legislature to ensure an achievable timeline and to ensure that all parts of the election process are considered as decisions are made.

Moving the Primary to a spring date would sync the election with neighboring states, avoid the busy and distracting summer season, and provide clarity on who the General election candidates will be earlier in the year. A spring primary would also allow for more time between the Primary and General, which would provide Auditors with additional time for translation, planning, and implementing improvements ahead of the General election.



Eliminate Advisory Votes

On General Election ballots, voters are regularly faced with several non-binding advisory votes that come near the top of their ballot – before even the race for President of the United States. It's not uncommon to see several advisory votes on a ballot, pushing all or most candidate races to the back and necessitating longer ballot sizes. These measures confuse voters, increase the cost of elections, and overshadow the measures and candidate races that make a tangible impact on our citizens' lives.