



# 2018 Legislative Priorities

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## WACO PRIORITIES

### Authorizing Agency for Recorded Documents



Auditors request the Secretary of State's Office become the centralized authorizing agency for public document recording.

These recording practices vary from county to county:

- Document fees and nonstandard fees.
- Use of cover pages.
- Types of documents accepted.
- Document titles.
- Forms used with customers.

This lack of uniformity creates:

- Unnecessary confusion for customers.
- A liability for local government (documents improperly recorded, revenue improperly collected).
- Difficulty providing statewide training.

With the proposed change to RCW, the Secretary of State's Office would conduct rulemaking for laws that govern the recording of public documents, which are found in over 10 RCW chapters.

### Write-In Candidates



This proposal requires the filing of a write-in declaration of candidacy, but allows the declaration to be made as late as Election Day.

The filing of a write-in declaration:

- Shows commitment and intent on the part of the candidate.
- Provides the spelling of the candidate's name and their party preference.
- Provides a residential address to confirm candidate is registered in district.
- Provides contact information.
- Removes the problem of common names (John Smith).
- Eliminates someone getting enough votes and not wanting to be a candidate.
- Specifies when write-in votes must be individually tallied for a candidate.

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### WSACA Legislative Committee

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## WSACA PRIORITIES

### Marriage



Auditors support the elimination of Marriage License time limits, and the ability to officiate marriages. Nationwide, the legislative trend is to eliminate waiting periods between licensure and ceremony. Washington State is in the minority.

Washington State has one of the fastest growing populations in America. Citizens are often surprised and frustrated with Washington's "cooling off" period. In addition, many counties host "destination weddings," with couples flying in from other states.

The 3-day waiting period has a particularly negative impact on the military. Military members are often in transit, arriving at one of our local bases for "onboarding" before leaving for their duty station overseas. They expect to be able to marry before departing.

Officiating marriages will create outstanding customer convenience and provide general fund revenue to the counties.

### Two or Fewer Candidates



When two or fewer candidates file for an office, Washington has different rules for partisan and nonpartisan candidates. Rules should be consistent in order to reduce voter confusion and avoid unnecessary expense.

When two or fewer candidates file for a nonpartisan office, they move directly to the General Election ballot, skipping the Primary. Partisan candidates appear in the Primary no matter how many candidates file. This causes single, unopposed races to appear on the Primary and General Election ballot.

This proposal equalizes fundraising limits by ensuring candidates receive the same contribution amounts, regardless of participating in the Primary or not. The current individual donation amount is capped at \$1,000 per election. "Per election" means each election in which the candidate appears on the ballot.

### Even Year Funding



Auditors seek reimbursement of election costs from the state when federal and state elections appear on the ballot.

With this proposal every county, city, town, district, and the state will be responsible for its proportionate share of the costs of elections. This proposal:

- Makes the state responsible for paying their share of election costs.
- Fairly distributes costs across all districts participating in the election.
- Decreases county election costs by increasing state election costs.



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## OTHER LEGISLATION SUPPORTED BY WSACA



### Voter Preregistration for Teens

Auditors unequivocally support voter preregistration for 17 year olds. Auditors will support preregistration for 16 year olds, if legislative proposals:

- Clearly state persons signing up are “not registered to vote until the person is 18 before the next election.”
- Require that voter preregistration information is exempt from public disclosure requirements.
- Do not take effect until the statewide voter registration database is compliant with this bill.
- Are not directly opposed by the Secretary of State.

### Prepaid Postage



Auditors support a Prepaid Postage bill, if the bill requires:

- Counties to include prepaid postage on return envelopes.
- The prepaid postage applies to all primary, general and special elections.
- Costs to be reimbursed by the state.

### Ballot Protection (*election ballots and voter information*)

Ballots need careful management of space to prevent multiple page ballots and the associated printing, mailing, and return postage costs.



Auditors support legislation to help manage and “protect” ballot space by:

- Grouping partisan and nonpartisan offices.
- Correcting the order of advisory votes.
- Removing the required PDC statement from the ballot and transfer it to election envelopes, inserts, or websites.
- Swapping SPI with Insurance Commissioner, thereby grouping partisan executive offices together.
- Reducing the size of local ballot titles, making them consistent with state ballot titles.

### Voter Registration Deadlines

Auditors unequivocally support:



- Shortening the in-state transfer date from 29 days to 28 days. This avoids conflicts with federal holidays, but preserves election integrity (ballots are mailed 18-days prior to the election).
- Shortening the online registration for new voters from 29 days to 11 days. This substantially expands the window for our most-popular form of registration, but allows counties time to prepare and mail the ballot to new voters.



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## Automatic Voter Registration



Auditors support automatic registration of people who aren't on the voter rolls but have obtained:

- An enhanced driver's license or commercial driver's license.
- Social services that verify citizenship.
- Health insurance through the state health exchange.

Auditors request the Secretary of State's Office send opt-out notifications to these prospective registrants and allow 60-days to opt-out.

- The person is given the opportunity to opt-out as they receive the service.
- The acknowledgement notice sent to new registrants also contains an opt-out.



## Elimination of Tax Advisory Votes

Tax Advisory votes have been in effect since 2012. These measures have no effect, occupy a large area of the ballot, are confusing to voters, and appear in the wrong order on the ballot.

Auditors support the elimination of Tax Advisory votes.

## Torrens Bill (registration of land titles)



Torrens (Registered Land) is a system of land registration defined under RCW 65.12 and supported by 105 sub-chapters (65.12.005 through 65.12.900). It is a complex, labor intensive system of land registration that must be kept separate from our standard recording systems. It requires counties to maintain an employee as the Registrar of Titles. The registrar must maintain and verify appropriate chain of title, the role modernly performed by title companies.

Auditors support the proposed bill that would abolish Torrens and instead record land titles using modern methods of recording and preserving documents.



## Predictable Recording Fee

Currently, the total recording fee varies from document to document based on the number of pages. This causes confusion and leads to rejections because the payment is incorrect.

Due to new federal rules, lenders must quote the exact recording fee to the borrower. The page based fee causes many rejections, which can jeopardize closing of the home sale.

A "Predictable Recording Fee" creates a single recording fee for documents, regardless of the number of pages. The national trend is towards a predictable recording fee. Thirteen states have adopted this structure, most in the last five years in response to the new federal rules.