



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager
Alex.Cuyler@co.lane.or.us

DATE: February 19, 2015
TO: Senate Committee on Rules
RE: SB 29, relating to precinct committee persons

Chair Rosenbaum and Members of the Committees:

The Lane County Board of County Commissioners regularly identifies priorities for each Legislative Assembly. They have identified the elimination of precinct committee person selection from local ballots (with sidebars) as one of their priorities. Their primary interest in this issue is from a fiscal perspective; a streamlined ballot equals less dollars required for each election managed by the County Clerk.

While not technically a recommendation from the 2009 Governor's Task Force on Federal Forest Payments and County Services, that group did focus on elections as an area where the state of Oregon could adopt policies that would help counties in fiscal distress.

The concept of streamline the voting process for committee precinct persons began to be floated legislatively in the 2011 session. County Clerks have worked on crafting a bill that still allows a vote for these positions to take place if the seat is contested. For non-contested seats, a process exists whereby the Clerk will certify the outcome of the election for that individual. Finally, for any seat for which no-one has expressed interest, a write in option will exist on each ballot.

Lane County urges the Rules Committee to schedule a works session for this measure and to vote it to the floor with a DO PASS recommendation.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Elections Division • Tim Scott, Director

Chair Rosenbaum and Members of the Committee,

Multnomah County supports SB 29

As you may know, Precinct Committee Person (PCP) elections occur every two years at the Primary election. Along with all the other positions that are elected or nominated at the Primary, approximately 17,000 positions are put on the ballot statewide whether there are candidates filed for the position or not. What you may not know is that when the election is completed about 75% of those positions are still vacant. The process of electing PCP's is incredibly inefficient and time consuming.

In May of 2014 there were 3,552 PCP positions available for election in Multnomah County. 498 candidates filed leaving more than 3,000 positions available to be elected by write-in. Write-ins must be hand tallied by elections workers and is a very time consuming process. The board workers hand tallied almost 5,000 write-ins leading to 93 people with the required 3 votes to be elected at a PCP. Of those 93 people with 3 votes, only 49 of them, when contacted, agreed to accept the position for which they had been elected. When it was all said and done between filed candidates and write-ins there were still 3,005 vacant positions.

SB 29 offers common sense PCP election reform

SB 29 would streamline the process by not requiring that uncontested races be placed on the ballot and only serious write-in candidate's votes would be tallied. If SB 29 were passed:

- Only contested races would be placed on the ballot – 21 contested races statewide in 2014;
- Filed candidates in uncontested races would be declared elected 10 days after the filing deadline;
- A candidate that missed the filing deadline but wanted to run a write in campaign could file a request to have their write-in votes tallied up until 8 days prior to Election Day. This ensures that only serious write-in votes are tallied and guarantees acceptance of the position;
- Contested races would be placed on the ballot and elected as they currently are;
- Male and Female designations are removed but representation is maintained by lowering ratio from 1 PCP to every 500 electors to 1 PCP for every 250 electors; and
- SB 29 would also require that county election offices post the list of PCP's on their website.

Multnomah County urges your support to improve the efficiency of PCP elections. Please support SB 29.

