



## Legislation Text

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Clerk 04/17/2006

AN ORDINANCE establishing the King County citizens' elections oversight committee; and adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 2.

**PREAMBLE:**

1. The proper administration of elections is an essential function of county government in Washington state and is a public trust that must be kept.
2. In July 2003, the council created the King County citizens' elections oversight committee in response to issues in the 2002 general election. The elections oversight committee concluded its work in 2004 by issuing a detailed report with one hundred sixteen recommendations.
3. The council reconvened the elections oversight committee in April 2005, again in response to election issues, and the committee concluded its work in March 2006, issuing a report that identified improvements in elections, areas where improvement is still needed, and making six high-priority recommendations.
3. In both instances, the King County citizens' elections oversight committee has provided invaluable service to county voters and county government, serving for over two years and making important recommendations to improve the conduct of elections.
3. The legislature has enacted several laws during the 2005 and 2006 sessions that have changed how elections are conducted.
4. Elections experts and citizen advisory groups have made numerous recommendations to the council and executive that, if enacted, would significantly change and improve elections

operations.

5. King County may consolidate elections operations into a single facility.

6. Given all the mandated and potential changes in elections operations, King County would benefit from the ongoing service of a citizens' election oversight committee to help oversee changes and to advise the council.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Sections 2 through 8 of this ordinance should constitute a new chapter in K.C.C. Title 2.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 2. The King County citizens' elections oversight committee is hereby established. For the purposes of this chapter, "the committee" means the King County citizens' elections oversight committee.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 3. A. The chair of the council and the vice chair of council affairs shall solicit nominations for membership from all council members. The chair of the council and the vice chair of council affairs shall jointly appoint oversight committee members who are confirmed by motion to the committee.

B. Committee membership shall include:

1. One representative from a nonpartisan organization active in King County that evaluates candidates and ballot measures, such as the Municipal League;

2. One representative from a nonpartisan organization active in King County that provides elections information to the public, such as the League of Women Voters;

3. One representative of an independent research and policy institute; and

4. One representative from a junior taxing district;

5. One representative of the Chinese-speaking community;

6. Two King County registered voters who are not representatives of any of the groups listed in subsection B.1. through 5. and 7. through 12. of this section

7. One representative from the King County Democratic Party;
8. One representative from the King County Republican Party;
9. One representative from the Washington state Democratic Party;
10. One representative from the Washington state Republican Party;
11. One ex officio, nonvoting representative from the Office of the Secretary of State;
12. One ex officio, nonvoting representative from the Washington State Association of County

Auditors;

C. All members should have:

1. A working knowledge of local or state government elections operations and management;
2. A strong commitment to an accountable, transparent, well-managed and efficient elections

operation in King County; and

3. A willingness to commit the time necessary to attend committee meetings and activities.

D. Except for the member representing the Washington State Association of Auditors, a nominee or appointee to the committee shall not hold elective public office or be a candidate for election to public office, other than as a precinct committee officer. E. Except for the ex officio members, members shall serve three-year terms. However, the representatives representing the groups under subsection B.6, 9. and 10. of this section appointed in 2006 initially shall serve one-year terms and the representative representing the group under subsection B.1, 2, 7. and 8. of this section appointed in 2006 initially shall serve a two-year term. Ex officio members serve at the pleasure of their office or association.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 4. The mission of the committee is to help King County restore and maintain public confidence in elections. The committee shall make recommendations to the council to:

A. Improve performance of the King County elections section; and

B. Help ensure that accountability and performance of the elections section is provided in a transparent manner that is meaningful to the residents of King County.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 5. A. Before undertaking its other responsibilities identified in this chapter, the committee shall elect officers and adopt administrative procedures consistent with this chapter.

B. To accomplish its responsibilities as outlined in this ordinance, the committee shall complete the following tasks:

1. Review recent reports on elections and recent legislation that affects elections standards, procedures, equipment and technologies;
2. Conduct oversight of the implementation of new standards or procedures for elections as mandated by federal, state or county legislation;
3. Monitor the primary and general elections and canvassing board meetings to observe if proper procedures are followed, to report on any problems that are observed or come to light, to recommend corrective actions on problems that may arise and to ensure that any problems that arise are discussed in an open and public manner. The committee shall report to the council in a timely way on any significant problems that might occur or on any serious concerns the committee may have;
4. Meet at least quarterly; and
5. Submit a report to the council on its observations, findings and recommendations regarding the primary and general elections by February 1 of each year by filing eleven copies of the report with the clerk of the council for distribution to all councilmembers.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 6. A. The council shall provide for appropriate staffing of the committee.

B. County staff in the department of executive services and the records, elections and licensing services division shall provide information requested by the committee in a timely manner.

C. By March 31, 2009, the citizens' elections oversight committee shall evaluate the extent to which county elections operations have changed or improved over the previous four years and whether there is a need for an ongoing elections oversight committee. This evaluation shall be submitted to the clerk of the council. The council shall then make its own determination on the need for an ongoing elections oversight committee.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 7. The county shall reimburse committee members for mileage at the standard county reimbursement rate for travel within the county to and from committee meetings. The county shall provide parking free of charge in the county garage to committee members while attending meetings where committee business is

conducted or the county shall pay for parking for committee business conducted at locations not near the county garage.