



## Legislation Text

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Clerk 08/12/2005

A MOTION adopting an Elections State Legislative Agenda for the 2006 legislative session, related to election reform actions that must be taken by the state, based on the recommendations from the King County independent task force on elections.

WHEREAS, King County executive Ron Sims appointed the King County independent task force on elections ("the task force") in April 2005 and charged them with developing short and long-term recommendations that would have a meaningful and enduring positive impact on the elections process in King County, and

WHEREAS, the King County independent task force on elections consisted of people with diverse backgrounds, interests, training and political perspectives and included several widely respected elections professionals including:

1. Cheryl Scott, Former President and Chief Executive Officer, Group Health;
2. Patricia Aitken (Retired Superior Court Judge), Arbitrator/Mediator, Judicial Arbitration and Medication Services;
3. David Boerner, Associate Professor of Law, Seattle University;
4. Philip Eaton, President, Seattle Pacific University;
5. Nick Handy, Director of Elections, State of Washington;
6. Susan Hutchison, Executive Director, Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences;
7. Joe Knight, Dean, University of Washington School of Law;

8. John Lindback, Elections Director, State of Oregon;
9. Suzanne Sinclair, Auditor, Island County; and
10. Stephen Sundborg, President, Seattle University, and

WHEREAS, the ultimate goal of the task force is, to restore public trust in King County's elections system not only by improving it, but by building a secure foundation for King County to have a model elections system for the nation, and

WHEREAS, Task Force members devoted hundreds of hours of time to their work, providing thoughtful examination of the issues, and a frank, candid assessment of the challenges the elections division faces that resulted in first rate, targeted recommendations that will assist King County in restoring public confidence in King County elections, and

WHEREAS, the task force stated in its final report that ". . . We deeply appreciate what a solemn public trust it is to guarantee and protect the most powerful of all civic rights, the right to vote. We anchored all our deliberations on the powerful ideal that every vote does indeed count. This ideal, we believe, is at the heart of our democracy, and must be restored and sustained for the people of King County and all citizens of the state," and

WHEREAS, the task force found that to achieve this ideal changes must occur at the state level, including:

1. Designate the first Tuesday in June as the date of Washington's primary election;
2. Reduce the number of elections held in Washington State during the calendar year from six to four and hold such elections in February, April, June and November;
3. Support legislation that provides, when a recount is necessary, that local elections officials would conduct only one recount, and that it be conducted by hand;
4. Require that state and county elections officials receive all ballots by eight o'clock on election night, except military, out-of-state and overseas voters; and

5. Simplify the process of restoring voting rights for former felons; specifically, that voting rights of former felons be automatically reinstated upon release from incarceration;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The council adopts the 2006 Elections State Legislative Agenda as attached, and

directs King County's intergovernmental relations staff to vigorously advocate for the changes needed at the state level to realize these agenda items.