

## **Candidate Filing Week starts June 1**

### **Local News**

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OLYMPIA... As this year's election season opens with Filing Week on Monday, June 1, Secretary of State Sam Reed is encouraging citizens to become more involved in their community by running for office. "There will be hundreds of nonpartisan offices up for election this year throughout Washington, but unfortunately, many of them usually have only one candidate running," Reed said. "I hope more people will consider running for public office as a way to give back and get involved in their community. Whether you have great passion for education or economic development or some other issue, you can put that passion to good use by serving in public office."

Reed said his call for more people to run for public office is part of his "Find Your One Thing" program in which students and citizens are encouraged to find one thing in which they become more civically involved. Candidates have several options to file for office. They may use the Internet, file in person or submit the paperwork by mail.

For the second time since the U.S. Supreme Court last year upheld the Top 2 Primary system adopted by citizen initiative in 2004, the Declaration of Candidacy form will allow candidates to self-describe their political preference, but this will not mean that the person is nominated by or supported by a party.

The form candidates submit will allow up to 16 characters to provide the name of the party a candidate prefers. Candidates cannot include profanity or imply or state that they are nominated or endorsed by a political party or that a party approves of or associates with them.

The regulations don't rule out candidates trying to wedge in additional information about themselves, such as "Anti-war Dem" or "Pro-life G.O.P", "Evans Republican" or "Jackson Democrat." But Reed, the state's chief elections officer, said he hopes candidates will simply list the actual name of a political party and not try to cram in personal or political information.

"Washingtonians take great pride in our elections, and they expect those who run for office to take this process seriously," Reed said. "Although very few candidates last year used silly names in stating their party preference, I hope that all candidates this year play it straight when it comes to this. If candidates expect to get elected, they need to show they are not playing games." Three seats in the state House of Representatives are up for election this year to complete an unexpired term: 9th Legislative District, Position 1; 15th Legislative District, Position 2; and 16th Legislative District, Position 2. Because each of these legislative districts is located in more than one county, candidates for these three legislative positions this year must file with the Office of Secretary of State. Two judicial positions will be on the ballot this year: Court of Appeals, Division 1, District 1, Judge Position 3 in King County; and Judge Position 10 of the Clark Superior Court in Clark County. Although Filing Week runs June 1-5, candidates have had the option of submitting their Declaration of Candidacy form and filing fee since May 15.

In-person filings will be accepted during regular business hours June 1-5 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the

Office of Secretary of State's Elections Division, 520 Union Avenue SE in Olympia, and at the main office in the Legislative Building in Olympia. The in-person filing deadline is 5 p.m. on June 5.

An increasingly popular way to submit a Declaration of Candidacy for office is online at <http://www.vote.wa.gov/>. Filings will be accepted after 9 a.m. on Monday, June 1, until 4 p.m. on Friday, June 5. The secure filings may be submitted at any hour of the day or night this way. Of the 332 candidates who filed with the Office of Secretary of State last year, 180 candidates filed electronically, or about 54 percent.

For a list of County Auditor Offices where candidates may file for local offices on the 2009 ballot, please visit [www.secstate.wa.gov/elections](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections).

After the close of Filing Week, the Office of Secretary of State will conduct a lot drawing to determine the order of candidates for each race on the 2009 ballot. Candidates are free to publicize party endorsements, their incumbency or other descriptions in their campaigns and in voters' pamphlet statements, but Reed said the actual ballot will be free of this material.

The party information will be displayed on the ballot as:

John Smith (Prefers Democratic Party)

Jane Doe (Prefers Republican Party)

Michael Martin (States No Party Preference)

Parties are no longer allowed to fill any vacancies, because there are no more major party tickets in a Top 2 Primary. All candidates are treated the same. A race can be reopened for a special filing period if nobody files during the regular filing period.

In the Primary Election, voters choose their favorite for each office without regard to party, and the top two vote-getters advance to the General Election. As approved by the voters and upheld last year by the U.S. Supreme Court, the Top 2 Primary is a winnowing election to narrow the field for the November General Election, and not a nominating election. Parties may hold their own nominating conventions to pick a favorite for each office. That information won't go on the ballot for the state-run primary or general elections.

Filing fees for offices with annual salaries of \$1,000 or more are 1 percent. For instance, it costs \$421.06 to run for the Legislature.

This is the third year that candidate Filing Week has occurred in the first week of June. In previous years, candidates filed for office in the last week of July, but that changed after the Washington State Primary date was moved in 2007 from September to August. The Primary Election is August 18. All counties but Pierce County are voting entirely by mail and ballots must be postmarked by August 18. The General Election is November 3.