

# **Thurston County Local Voters' Pamphlet Administrative Rules**

**Revised April 20, 2011**

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of these rules is to provide valuable information to local jurisdictions that participate in the pamphlet. In addition, these rules follow laws which are designed to provide voters with informative, non-biased, consistent, and readable information. The pamphlet provides candidate and measure statements as well as voter registration and election information.

## **II. Guidelines Followed**

These rules are in conformance with state and local voters' pamphlet election laws in Title 29A of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and the Washington Administrative Code, WAC 434.

## **III. Administrative Rules**

- A. Content Outline
- B. Rules for Participation by Local Jurisdictions
- C. Rules for Ballot Measure Explanatory Statements
- D. Rules for Ballot Measure Pro and Con Statements
- E. Rules for Candidate Statements and Photographs

# THURSTON COUNTY LOCAL VOTERS' PAMPHLET ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

## CONTENT OUTLINE

### Content Requirements

1. Appearing on the cover will be the words " [insert current year] Official Local Voters' Pamphlet for Thurston County," "Published by the Thurston County Auditor's Office," and the date of the election (RCW 29A.32.241).
2. A list of jurisdictions participating in the production of the pamphlet (RCW 29A.32.241).
3. Letter of Introduction from the Thurston County Auditor.
4. Table of Contents.
5. Comprehensive contact information for the Thurston County Auditor's Office.
6. A sample ballot which lists ballot measures and candidates in the same order in which they are designated to appear on the ballot prepared pursuant to RCW 29A.36.151.
7. A list of all open ballot drop boxes in Thurston County with notification the boxes will close promptly at 8:00 p.m. on Election Night.
8. Disability access voting information including a schedule of disability access voting locations and a list of the various types of accessible formats of the Local Voters' Pamphlet.
9. Information on how a person may register to vote and obtain a ballot (RCW 29A.32.241).
10. Graphics, artwork, and any other material which will make the pamphlet easier to understand and more useful for the average voter.
11. The text of any ballot measure submitted by a participating jurisdiction, accompanied by an explanatory statement prepared by the jurisdiction's attorney. If the ballot measure is a county measure, the County Prosecuting Attorney shall write the explanatory statement.
12. The pro, con, and rebuttal statements for and against each measure submitted by the pro and con committees. The names of the members of the pro and con committees selected pursuant to RCW29A.32.280 and RCW 29A.32.241.
13. A. The following statement shall be printed at least once when pro or con statements appear:  
"Statements printed are the opinions of the authors and have not been checked for factual or grammatical accuracy by any official government agency."  
  
B. The following statement shall be printed at least once when candidate statements appear:  
"Candidate statements are printed as submitted and are not checked for factual or grammatical accuracy by any official government agency."

C. Statements specified in A and B of this section may be combined if both candidate and measure statements are included. The combined statement shall be printed at least once.

14. Ballot measures and candidate statements shall be printed in the pamphlet in the same order, manner, and form in which they are designated on the ballot.
15. For partisan Primary Elections, information will be included on the Top Two Primary (RCW.29A.52.112).
16. A brief description of the elected offices that will appear on the ballot.
17. Statements and photographs of the candidates for elected office.

# **THURSTON COUNTY LOCAL VOTERS' PAMPHLET ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

## **RULES FOR PARTICIPATION BY LOCAL JURISDICTIONS**

All local jurisdictions in the county, with measures or candidates on the ballot, shall participate in the Thurston County Primary and General Election Local Voters' Pamphlets. Local jurisdictions shall include information on all jurisdictional ballot measures and candidate offices scheduled to appear on the ballot.

If the required appearance in the pamphlet would create undue financial hardship for the local jurisdiction, the legislative authority of the jurisdiction may petition the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), ninety (90) days before publication of the Local Voters' Pamphlet, to waive this requirement (RCW 29A.32.220).

The Thurston County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) may grant such a waiver if it does so not later than sixty (60) days before the publication of the pamphlet and it finds that the participation in the Local Voters' Pamphlet would create such financial hardship. "Publication of the pamphlet" is defined as the date on which the pamphlet has been signed off by the County Auditor and sent to the printer (RCW 29A32.220).

### **Notification to Local Jurisdictions**

The County Auditor shall notify all jurisdictions at least 120 days before the publication of the Local Voters' Pamphlet that a pamphlet will be produced. The letter shall include the financial hardship clause.

### **Verification of Local Jurisdictions Not Participating in the Pamphlet**

The County Auditor shall be notified in writing of any waiver granted by the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) no later than sixty (60) days before the publication of the pamphlet. The local jurisdiction shall also give the County Auditor a copy of its petition to the BOCC.

### **Responsibility for the Cost of the Local Voters' Pamphlet**

The cost of the Local Voters' Pamphlet shall be considered an election cost to those jurisdictions included in the pamphlet and shall be prorated in the manner provided in RCW 29A. 32.270 and RCW 29A.04.410 which states:

Every city, town, and district is liable for its proportionate share of the costs when such elections are held in conjunction with other elections. . .

The purpose of this section is to clearly establish that the county is not responsible for any costs involved in the holding of any city, town, or district election.

## **Interlocal Agreements**

In cases where a local jurisdiction wishes to participate in the pamphlet but the boundary lines of that district extend into another county, the County Auditor shall formally request in writing from the adjoining County Auditor an agreement that Thurston County is permitted to mail pamphlets to those voters residing in the affected county. If the County Auditor from the affected county so chooses, he or she may, through his or her office, distribute the Thurston County Local Voters' Pamphlets. The cost of the voter pamphlet is billed to the local jurisdiction as an election cost.

(New Section)

## **THURSTON COUNTY LOCAL VOTERS' PAMPHLET ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

### **RULES FOR EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS**

#### **Explanatory Statements Required**

An explanatory statement about the ballot measure must accompany all ballot measures submitted to the County Auditor for inclusion in the Local Voters' Pamphlet. All explanatory statements become public information five (5) days after receipt by this office.

#### **Attorney for the District to Prepare Explanatory Statement**

The attorney for the city, town, or district submitting the ballot measure should prepare the explanatory statement. All explanatory statements are subject to review by the County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

#### **Purpose of the Explanatory Statement**

The explanatory statement shall indicate the purpose of the proposed measure, including any changes to current law and the results of the proposed ballot measure if passed. The explanatory statement should provide voters with informative, non-biased, consistent, and readable information.

#### **Restrictions on Explanatory Statements**

Explanatory statements shall be submitted by the local jurisdiction's attorney and shall not exceed 175 words and three (3) paragraphs (hard returns).

The County Auditor will reject statements which contain obscene, vulgar, or profane language, or any language which in any way incites, counsels, promotes, or advocates hatred, abuse, violence, and/or hostility toward or which tends to bring ridicule or shame upon a person or group of persons by reason of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, or religion.

#### **Restrictions on the Style of Statements in the Local Voters' Pamphlet**

The County Auditor finds that it is in the public interest that all statements published in the Local Voters' Pamphlet are of similar format and style. To promote such consistency, all explanatory statements submitted for publication in the Local Voters' Pamphlet shall include the name of the jurisdiction's attorney submitting the statement. All statements will be typeset in block paragraph style without tables, lists, or bullets or other material requiring multiple indentations. Words which are underlined, or in italics, or all upper-case letters, or bold print will be typeset in italics. We recommend that such formatting be avoided as it reduces the readability of the statement.

## **Deadline for Submission of Explanatory Statements**

Explanatory statements about measures appearing in the Primary or General Election Local Voters' Pamphlet shall be submitted to the County Auditor on or before 77 days before the election. The 77 days deadline is one week after the deadline for submission of measures to appear on the ballot.

If a special election voter pamphlet is produced, the submission deadlines will vary. Contact the County Auditor's Office for the deadlines.

# **THURSTON COUNTY LOCAL VOTERS' PAMPHLET ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

## **RULES FOR BALLOT MEASURE PRO AND CON STATEMENTS**

### **Committees to Write Statements For and Against Measures**

For each ballot measure from a local jurisdiction that is included in the Local Voters' Pamphlet, the legislative authority of that local jurisdiction shall, on or before seventy-seven (77) days before the date of the election:

1. Formally appoint a committee to prepare statements advocating voters' approval of the measure; and
2. Formally appoint a committee to prepare statements advocating voters' rejection of the measure;
3. Submit the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the committee members to the Thurston County Auditor's Office. The names of the committee members will be printed in The Local Voters' Pamphlet as the authors of the statement.

The jurisdiction shall appoint persons known to favor the measure to serve on the committee advocating approval and shall, whenever possible, appoint persons known to oppose the measure to serve on the committee advocating rejection (RCW 29A.32.280).

Each committee shall not have more than three members. However, a committee may seek the advice of any person or persons. Each appointed committee will be provided with a copy of these specifications to enable the committee to be aware of deadlines and other statement specifics. The committee shall elect from among its members a chairperson to act as the contact person with the Auditor's office.

If the legislative authority of the jurisdiction fails to make such appointments for either a pro or con committee by the prescribed deadline, it shall notify the County Auditor, in writing, on or before seventy-seven (77) days before the election. The County Auditor shall advertise for those committee members the jurisdiction was unable to appoint.

### **Advisory Committees**

Committees appointed to write statements for or against ballot measures appearing in the Local Voters' Pamphlet may select up to five (5) other persons to serve as an advisory committee within five (5) days after formation of the committee. Only the names of the three (3) pro/con committee members will be published in the Local Voters' Pamphlet.

### **Length of Statements and Rebuttals**

Statements for and against ballot measures appearing in the Local Voters' Pamphlet shall not exceed 250 words. The committee may use up to four (4) brief subject headings to summarize and identify major arguments or portions of the statement for the convenience of the reader, and such headings shall be included in the computation of the number of words in the statement. The committee members' contact

information consisting of name, telephone number, email, and/or internet address will not be included in the maximum word count.

Rebuttals to statements for and against measures appearing in the Local Voters' Pamphlet shall not exceed seventy-five (75) words and must address issues raised in the opposing statement without injecting issues not previously discussed by either the statement for or against that measure. Headings are not permitted in connection with rebuttal statements.

All statements “for” or “against” a ballot measure in excess of the 250 word count and rebuttal statements in excess of 75 words will have the extra words omitted. If such a deletion creates an incomplete sentence, that incomplete sentence will also be omitted. In order to be fair and to give equal treatment to all committees, there will be no exceptions to this word limitation.

Computation of the word-count is done by hand with each word counted as one. Hyphenated words count as two words, for example, family-wage would count as two words. Prefixes such as pre-date, mid-January, or pre-Revolutionary count as one word.

### **Restrictions on Style of Statements**

The County Auditor finds that it is in the public interest that all statements published in the Local Voters' Pamphlet are of similar format and style.

All statements shall be typeset in block paragraph style without tables, lists, bullets, or other material requiring multiple indentations. Words, phrases, or whole sentences which are underlined, in bold print, printed in a larger font size, in upper case letters, or in italics will be typeset in italics in a font size matching the rest of the statement. Statements submitted in upper case letters will be set in normal lower case, except for the first letter of proper nouns and the first letter of the first word in a sentence.

### **Deadline and Method for Submission of Statements and Rebuttals**

Statements for or against ballot measures appearing in the Local Voters' Pamphlet shall be submitted to the County Auditor by the chairperson of the committee appointed to draft that statement. The deadline for submission of statements and rebuttals will be 70 days before the date of the election. The specific calendar dates shall be provided to the local jurisdictions at the time they are notified by the County Auditor of the resolution deadline dates for the Primary and General Elections.

Rebuttals to pro or con statements shall be submitted to the County Auditor by the chairperson of the opposing committee within five (5) days after receipt of the original pro or con statement the committee is rebutting.

Statements may be submitted in electronic or printed format.

### **Costs**

No cost shall be charged to committees submitting materials to be included in the Local Voters' Pamphlet.

The cost of the Local Voters' Pamphlet shall be considered an election cost to those local jurisdictions included in the pamphlet and shall be prorated in the manner provided in RCW 29A.04.410.

## **Rejection of Statements for the Local Voters' Pamphlet**

The County Auditor will reject statements which contain obscene, vulgar, or profane language, or any language which in any way incites, counsels, promotes, or advocates hatred, abuse, violence, and/or hostility toward or which tends to bring ridicule or shame upon a person or group of persons by reason of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, or religion.

Five (5) business days after receipt of a pro or con statement, the Thurston County Auditor's Office shall notify the committee submitting the statement of any rejection or partial rejection of the statement.

## **Appeal of Rejected Statements**

Within five (5) business days after rejection of a statement or a portion of a statement, the committee proposing such statement may appeal the rejection to the County Auditor. The County Auditor shall render a decision within three (3) business days of the appeal, and such decision to accept or reject the statement shall be final.

## **Editing of Statements for the Local Voters' Pamphlet**

The County Auditor finds that it is in the public interest that all statements published in the Local Voters' Pamphlet are accurate in form and syntax. To promote such accuracy, the County Auditor may, at his or her discretion, correct any incidental errors of spelling, grammar, and punctuation which he or she feels would unfairly prejudice the statement or confuse the voters, as long as such corrections do not alter the meaning or substance of the statement. The Thurston County Auditor is not obligated, however, to make such corrections and assumes no responsibility for errors which result from inaccuracies in the original statement submitted by the committee.

## **Deadline Extension**

The County Auditor shall have the authority to grant any deadline extension which he/she feels is in the best public interest. All extensions shall be equally granted to opposing candidates or committees.

## **Where to Submit Statements**

Elections Division  
Thurston County Auditor  
2000 Lakeridge Dr SW  
Olympia, WA 98502  
Email: [pamphlet@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:pamphlet@co.thurston.wa.us)

# **THURSTON COUNTY LOCAL VOTERS' PAMPHLET ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

## **RULES FOR CANDIDATE STATEMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

### **Deadline for Submission of Statements and Photographs**

Any candidate who wishes to have a statement and photograph appear in the Thurston County Local Voters' Pamphlet must submit such material to the Thurston County Auditor's Office, Elections Division. Statements and photographs are due the Monday following filing week. All material will be date stamped upon receipt.

Candidates advancing from the Primary Election to the General Election shall have an opportunity to revise their statements for inclusion in the General Election Local Voters' Pamphlet. Photos used in the Primary Election Local Voters' Pamphlet will remain the same for the General Election Local Voters' Pamphlet.

Deadlines for statement revisions shall be established by the County Auditor's Office and provided to candidates at the time of filing. Candidates who are defeated in the Primary Election shall not have their statements appear in the General Election Local Voters' Pamphlet.

### **Statement Length**

Statements submitted by candidates shall be limited to no more than 150 words and no more than four (4) hard returns.

Each individual word is counted as one word. All words contained within hyphenated words or phrases shall count individually with the exception of prefixes. Website addresses and prefixes such as pre-date, mid-January, or pre-Revolutionary count as one word. Words separated by a "/" are counted as two words. All material in excess of the 150 word limit, counting from the end of the statement, will be omitted. If such a deletion creates an incomplete sentence at the end of the statement, that incomplete sentence will also be omitted. The Auditor's Office may attempt to contact candidates to shorten their statements, if time permits, but is under no obligation to do so. There will be no exception to these limitations.

Contact information for each candidate shall be included in the pamphlet without inclusion in the 150 word limit. Contact information is limited to the candidate's phone number, physical or mailing address, email address, and/or web address.

Candidates should include this information with submission of their statements. Website addresses will be counted as ONE word, if used as part of the candidate statement. If the candidate does not provide contact information with his or her statement, the Auditor's Office will use the information provided on his or her candidate filing paperwork.

### **Statement Submission Standards**

In order to maintain good standards of readability and to ensure accuracy in typesetting this material for publication, the following standards have been established:

1. Candidate statements shall be typed.
2. The candidate's contact information: name, address, telephone number, email and web address along with the office sought, should appear at the top of the statement. The contact information will be published in the pamphlet as submitted.
3. The material shall be set in paragraph style. Due to pamphlet space limitations, lists of items which require multiple indentations, including bullets, are not permitted. Items which are submitted as multiple indents will be combined by the Auditor's Office in line format with semicolons separating each item.
4. Words, phrases, and sentences which are emphasized by italics, underlining, capital letters, or bold print will be typeset in italics. We recommend candidates avoid such emphasis, as it reduces the readability of the statement.
5. The candidate's campaign contact information should be clearly indicated following the text of the candidate's 150 word statement. Campaign contact information will be printed in the Local Voters' Pamphlet to enable voters to contact the candidate or the candidate's campaign.

### **Statement Content**

The Auditor's Office shall reject any candidate's statement deemed to be libelous or otherwise inappropriate (See Rejection of Statements). Statements submitted must pertain to the individual candidate and his or her candidacy, the office he or she is seeking, and/or the jurisdiction in which he or she lives. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure all information contained in his or her statement is true and accurate. The Auditor's Office does not check statements for factual accuracy.

Statement content suggestions: occupation, education, professional qualifications, why the candidate seeks the office, what ideas the candidate has if elected, length of residence in the county, city, town, or district, additional personal information, and community involvement.

### **Editing Statements**

In a publication of this magnitude, it is inevitable that the material submitted for publication will contain some inadvertent errors of spelling, punctuation, or syntax, which would adversely affect the readability of the statement and improperly reflect on the candidate. The County Auditor may correct such incidental errors, as long as this does not affect the content of the statement. This office is not obligated, however, to make such corrections and assumes no responsibility for errors which result from inaccuracies in the original statement submitted by the candidate.

### **Rejection of Statements for the Local Voters' Pamphlet**

The County Auditor will reject statements which contain obscene, vulgar or profane language, or any language which in any way incites, counsels, promotes, or advocates hatred, abuse, violence, and/or hostility toward or which tends to bring ridicule or shame upon a person or group of persons by reason of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, or religion.

If any portion of the candidate's statement is rejected, only that rejected portion may be rewritten and submitted for inclusion in the statement.

### **Appeal of Rejected Statements**

Candidates will be notified if their statements, or any portion thereof, have been rejected. They will be given an opportunity to appeal that rejection or resubmit a statement or revision of the portion which has been rejected. Due to time constraints, a second rejection is final.

Appeals will be made to the County Auditor, who has three (3) business days to respond to the appeal. The Auditor has the final decision in the acceptance and rejection of statements.

### **Proofing of Statements**

To ensure maximum accuracy in the publication of candidate statements, the County Auditor shall provide a proof copy of each statement to the candidate prior to publication. It is the responsibility of the candidate to sign off on the proof copy and notify the County Auditor of any corrections or misprints immediately if changes are necessary.

Candidates will not be permitted to amend the content of their original statements after a proof has been provided. Only the correction of incidental errors in spelling, punctuation, or syntax in the original statement or errors in typesetting will be allowed.

### **Candidate Photographs**

Candidates may submit photographs to be included with their statements. To assure the best possible reproduction, all photographs should be:

1. Digital photographs are preferred in either .jpg, .tiff, or .psd formats. Color photos will be converted to black and white. Digital photographs as part of a Word document or PDF are not acceptable.
2. Hard copy pictures shall be no smaller than 3 x 5 inches or larger than 5 x 7 inches. Digital photos should be no larger than 1124 x 1280 pixels or smaller than 740 x 800 pixels.
3. Limited to the head and shoulders of the candidate (frontal view of the candidate). To achieve best contrast, we recommend that you use a photograph with a light (not white) background. Backgrounds should be neutral - no buildings, landscape, or props, (e.g., flags). Do not include other persons in your photograph.
4. No more than five years old.
5. Free from any insignia or clothing which designates the candidate's present elected office, or any uniform or insignia of any organization which advocates or teaches racial, religious, or any other type of intolerance.

It is preferred that photos be electronically submitted using the formats listed above. Do not embed photos in a PDF or Word document. If candidates wish to receive their photos back after publication, they must notify the Auditor's Office at the time of submission.

### **Statement and Photograph Costs**

No cost shall be charged to candidates submitting material to be included in the Local Voters' Pamphlet. The cost of the Local Voters' Pamphlet shall be considered an election cost to those local jurisdictions included in the pamphlet, and the cost shall be prorated in the manner provided in RCW 29A.04.410.

### **Statement and Photograph Rules for Candidates Advancing to the General Election**

Candidate photographs used in the Primary Election Local Voters' Pamphlet will also be used in the General Election Local Voters' Pamphlet. Primary statements may be revised by those candidates who move forward to the General Election from the Primary Election. The date for revisions will be defined by the Thurston County Auditor.

#### **Send Statement and Photograph to:**

Thurston County Auditor  
Elections Division  
2000 Lakeridge Dr. SW  
Olympia, WA 98502  
[pamphlet@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:pamphlet@co.thurston.wa.us)