

# Initiative Measure No. 912, filed March 20, 2017

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BILL REQUEST - CODE REVISER'S OFFICE

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BILL REQ. #: I-3389.1/17

ATTY/TYPIST: KS:akl

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

# Initiative Measure No. 912, filed March 20, 2017

AN ACT Relating to establishing a law that presidential candidates must release their most recent eight years of personal federal income tax returns and most recent eight years of all business federal income tax returns to the public prior to being included on ballots or qualifying as write-in candidates; amending RCW 29A.56.030 and 29A.56.640; adding a new section to chapter 29A.56 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

## **PART I POLICIES AND PURPOSES**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The state of Washington has the right to establish qualifications and procedures for candidates to have their names included on state ballots for president of the United States. Prior to the 2016 presidential election, it was common practice for presidential candidates to release to the public their federal income tax returns, although it was not required by law. Washington voters must be able to evaluate many aspects of presidential

candidates' backgrounds in order to determine which candidate is most qualified. Reviewing candidates' tax returns is one way to evaluate candidates' qualifications. Voters use information on tax returns to assess candidates' knowledge, experience, business acumen, financial stability, potential conflicts of interest, and, possibly, honesty.

**PART II**  
**LAW REQUIRING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TO RELEASE THEIR**  
**TAX RETURNS**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 29A.56 RCW to read as follows:

A potential candidate for president of the United States must release to the general public all pages of his or her personal federal income tax returns for at least the most recent eight years and all pages of his or her business federal income tax returns for at least the most recent eight years in order to qualify to be:

- (1) On the ballot for president of the United States in a presidential preference primary;
- (2) On the ballot for president of the United States in a general election;
- (3) A write-in candidate for president of the United States in a presidential preference primary; or
- (4) A write-in candidate for president of the United States in a general election.

**Sec. 3.** RCW 29A.56.030 and 2011 c 349 s 19 are each amended to read as follows:

The name of any candidate for a major political party nomination for president of the United States shall be printed on the presidential preference primary ballot of a major political party only after the candidate has made the releases required by section 2 of this act and only:

(1) By direction of the secretary of state, who in the secretary's sole discretion has determined that the candidate's candidacy is generally advocated or is recognized in national news media; or

(2) If members of the political party of the candidate have presented a petition for nomination of the candidate that has attached to the petition a sheet or sheets containing the signatures of at least one thousand registered voters who declare themselves in the petition as being affiliated with the same political party as the presidential candidate. The petition shall be filed with the secretary of state not later than seventy-five days before the presidential preference primary. The signature sheets shall also contain the residence address and name or number of the precinct of each registered voter whose signature appears thereon and shall be certified in the manner prescribed in RCW 29A.72.230 and 29A.72.240.

The secretary of state shall place the name of the candidate on the ballot unless the candidate, at least sixty-seven days before the presidential preference primary, executes and files with the secretary of state an affidavit stating without qualification that he or she is not now and will not become a candidate for the office of president of the United States at the forthcoming presidential election. The secretary of state shall certify the names of all candidates who will appear on the presidential preference primary ballot to the respective county auditors on or before the fourth Tuesday in April of each presidential election year.

**Sec. 4.** RCW 29A.56.640 and 2013 c 11 s 28 are each amended to read as follows:

A certificate evidencing nominations made at a convention must:

- (1) Be in writing;
- (2) Contain the name of each person nominated, his or her residence, the office for which he or she is named, and a sworn statement from both nominees giving their consent to the nomination;

(3) Identify the minor political party or the independent candidate on whose behalf the convention was held;

(4) Be verified by the oath of the presiding officer and secretary;

(5) Be accompanied by a nominating petition or petitions bearing the signatures and addresses of at least one thousand registered voters of the state of Washington;

(6) Contain proof that the person nominated for president of the United States has made the releases required by section 2 of this act;

(7) Contain proof of publication of the notice of calling the convention; and

~~((7))~~ (8) Be submitted to the secretary of state not later than the first Friday of August.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act may be known and cited as the law requiring presidential candidates to release their tax returns.

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