



City of Bellevue

City Manager's Office

DATE: September 10, 2024

SUBJECT: Legislative Update, August 2024

Electoral Overview

The 2024 August Primary included a lengthy ballot of competitive local, legislative, executive and congressional races. The August Primary is an early indicator of what to expect during the November General Election, shedding light on emerging political trends and likely outcomes leading to the Presidential race in the November General Election.

Ballot counting began as soon as polls closed at 8pm on August 6, narrowing the number of candidates vying for each position to the two who garner the most votes. Those two candidates will appear on the November General Election ballot. See [TVW's Elections Explained: Top Two Primary](#) to learn more about the history of Washington's election process.

As of September 4, the Washington Secretary of State's Office (SOS) has certified all August Primary races. Nearly 2 million ballots were cast in this primary or about 40.9 percent of registered voters, down from 54.4 percent in the 2020 General Election. Visit the [Secretary of State's election results page](#) to continue tracking results, and review specific race details below.

The only undecided Primary Election result, and the only election results to change from the August 6 election night, is the race for Washington Commissioner of Public Lands. The position, previously held by Hillary Franz (D), had a mandatory statewide manual (hand) recount, which is a first for a Primary Election since 1960 and the closest race in state history according to the SOS. Former U.S. Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler (R) secured her spot on the November ballot, with the second spot going to King County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove (D). The manual recount indicated a 49-vote margin separating second-place finisher Upthegrove from Sue Kuehl Pederson (R).

Ballots for the November 5 General Election will be mailed out by October 18.

State Executive Offices: There are pending vacancies for nine executive positions currently held by Democrats. Democrats secured the lead in all of the positions following the August Primary.

- *Governor:* Attorney General, Democrat Bob Ferguson (44.88%) and former County Sheriff and Congressman Republican Dave Reichert (27.48%) advance out of the 28-candidate Primary to the General Election. Reichert was not endorsed by the state GOP in the lead up to the August Primary, who instead endorsed Semi Bird (R) (10.79%).
- *Lt. Governor:* Incumbent Denny Heck (D) (48.62%) leads against Dan Matthews (R) (22.99%) with 8.9% of the votes going towards the second Democrat candidate and 16.7% going towards the second Republican candidate who will not advance to the General Election.
- *Secretary of State:* Incumbent Steve Hobbs (D) (48.38%) and Dale Whitaker (R)

(36.87%) will advance to the General Election in November.

- *State Treasurer:* Incumbent Mike Pellicciotti (D) (58.32%) and Sharon Hanek (R) (41.6%) will advance to the General Election.
- *State Auditor:* Current State Auditor Pat McCarthy (D) (58.82%) and Matt Hawkins (R) (40.09%) will advance to the General Election.
- *Attorney General:* With Bob Ferguson running for Governor, Pete Serrano (R) (42.11%) takes the lead with Nick Brown (D) (35.28%) following behind. The only other candidate on the ballot, Senator Manka Dhingra (D), held 22.54% of the votes that will likely shift to Brown in the General Election.
- *Commissioner of Public Lands:* The seven-candidate Primary required a statewide manual recount that was certified on September 4 (*see above*). Jamie Herrera Beutler (R) (22.03%) and Dave Upthegrove (D) (20.82%) will advance to the General Election.
- *Superintendent of Public Instruction:* Two-term incumbent Chris Reykdal (39.3%) will face David Olson (31.22%) in November.
- *Insurance Commissioner:* State senators Patty Kuderer (D) (45.18%) and Phil Fortunato (R) (28.52%) will advance as the top two of seven to the General Election. Current Commissioner Mike Kreidler (D) is retiring from the position which he has held since 2001.

State Legislature: In addition to the executive branch, all members of the House of Representatives and approximately half the members of the State Senate are up for re-election. Democrats currently hold the majority in the State Senate (29-20) and the State House of Representatives (58-40). Regardless of changes in the political climate, approximately one-third of the State Legislature will be new as there are 18 legislators who chose not to seek re-election for their current seat. A full list of senators who are up for election this cycle can be viewed [here](#), and candidates seeking election according to the new district boundaries can be viewed [here](#).

Legislative districts in the urban Puget Sound region that caught the progressive wave over the last few years seem to be settling back into their moderate roots. Meanwhile, legislative districts in rural areas of the state seem to be maintaining status quo and trending toward Republican candidates. The potential result is a mix of wins for both parties that is not likely to substantially change the balance of power. There is a slim possibility that Democrats may be able to gain enough seats to garner a super majority (60%) in one of the chambers.

Senate:

- *2nd Legislative District (Pierce and Thurston counties, Graham, Roy):* Current Senator Jim McCune (R) (38.94%) will face Erasmo Ruiz Gonzalez (D) (34.21%) in November.
- *4th Legislative District (Colbert, Greenbluff, Liberty Lake, Millwood, Spokane Valley):* Current Representative Leonard Christian (R) (21.45%) took the lead against four other Republicans to advance to the General Election, where he will likely prevail in what has historically been a strong Republican district.

- 5th Legislative District (Issaquah): Current House Representative Bill Ramos (D) (53.78%) will face former House Representative Chad Magendanz (R) (46.16%) this November.
- 10th Legislative District (Island, Skagit and Snohomish counties): Incumbent Ron Muzzall (R) (48.24%) will face Janet St Clair (D) (45.64%). This will be one of the close races to watch in the General Election that could allow Democrats to gain a super majority.
- 12th Legislative District (Chelan County, parts of Douglas, King and Snohomish counties): Keith Goehner (R) (56.07%) who is currently a Representative for the district, will face Jim Mayhew (D) (43.83%) in the General Election.
- 14th Legislative District (Klickitat and Skamania counties, and parts of Yakima and Clark counties): Current Senator Curtis King (R) (58.02%) held a strong lead against Maria Beltran (D) (41.74%) going into the General Election despite recent redistricting that forced him to move to seek re-election. Democrats have been indicating that the 14th District leans Democrat after redistricting; however, these Primary results suggest otherwise.
- 16th Legislative District (Walla Walla, Benton and Pasco counties): Current Senator, Perry Dozier (R) (63.78%) will face Kari Isaacson (D) (36.14%) in the General Election.
- 17th Legislative District (Vancouver and parts of Clark County): Incumbent Paul Harris (R) (50.62%) faces Marla Keethler (D) (49.2%) in the General Election. This will continue to be one of the closer races in the Senate.
- 18th Legislative District (Clark County, Battle Ground, Salmon Creek and Vancouver): Current Representative Greg Cheney (R) falls aggressively behind his two opponents, Brad Benton (R) (30.75%) and Adrian Cortes (D) (46.22%) who will face off in the General Election. This will be one of the close races to watch in the General Election.
- 19th Legislative District (Cowlitz County (part), Grays Harbor County (part), Lewis County (part), Pacific County, Wahkiakum County): Incumbent Jeff Wilson (R) (60.01%) will face Andi Day (D) (39.75%) in the General Election.
- 24th Legislative District (Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor counties (part) Grays Harbor): Current Representative, Mike Chapman (D) (54.02%), takes the lead with Marcia Kelbon (R) (40.98%) trailing behind. There was a third Democrat candidate in the race, suggesting that Chapman has the upper hand going into the General Election.

House of Representatives:

- 4th Legislative District (Colbert, Greenbluff, Liberty Lake, Millwood, Spokane Valley): Rob Chase (R) (24.37%) will face Ted Cummings (D) (24.03%) in the General Election. Rob Chase is likely to win in what has historically been a strong Republican district.
- 14th Legislative District (Klickitat and Skamania counties, and parts of Yakima and Clark counties): Six new faces competed in the Primary for the two open House seats following recent redistricting that heavily impacted the 14th Legislative District. Chelsea Dimas (D) (36.94%) takes the lead for Position 1, with Gloria Mendoza (R) (32.61%)

closely behind. The other Republican in the race, Andy Kallinen (R) (30.22%), held many votes that will likely shift to Mendoza in the General Election. For Position 2, Deb Manjarrez (R) (54.22%) and Ana Ruiz Kennedy (D) (39.44%) will face off in the General Election. This race could impact the ability for Democrats to gain a super majority.

- 18th Legislative District (Clark County, Battle Ground, Salmon Creek and Vancouver): The seat of current Representative Greg Cheney is at risk of flipping after losing his Senate race. John Ley (R) (38.44%) is trailing John Zingale (D) (47.82%) but the two will face off in the General Election.
- 23rd Legislative District (Kitsap County and Bainbridge Island): Appointed incumbent Greg Nance (D) (45.9%), who is favored to win the historically Democrat district, defeated two Democrat challengers and will face Jamie Miles (R) (29.65%) in the General Election.
- 26th Legislative District (Gig Harbor, Port Orchard, parts of Bremerton): After serving as a Representative for eight years and losing the Senate race against Emily Randall in 2022, Jesse Young (R) (33.87%) has prevailed against a moderate Republican candidate to return to take back a House seat. He is up against Adison Richards (D) (49.6%) in the General Election. For Position 2, Incumbent Michelle Caldier (R) (33.7%) found herself in a five-candidate Primary, with Tiffany Mitchell (D) (29.77%) trailing behind. This district continues to be a swing district, consistent with historic trends.
- 27th Legislative District (Tacoma, Ruston, Browns Point, Dash Point, and Fife): Incumbent Jake Fey (D) (70.16%) seems to have the upper hand against progressive Democrat challenger Devin Rydel Kelly (D) (26.95%) for the General Election.
- 35th Legislative District (Mason, Thurston (part) and Kitsap (part) Counties): Incumbent Travis Couture (R) (46.66%) takes the lead with James DeHart (D) (43.02%) following behind. The third candidate, who was a Republican, held 10.17% of the votes that will likely shift to Couture in the General Election.
- 42nd Legislative District (Whatcom, Bellingham): Incumbent Alicia Rule (D) (46.58%) faces a tight race with Raymond Pelletti (R) (45.72%) in the General Election. However, the third candidate, who was a Democrat, held 7.62% of the votes, skewing primary numbers that will likely shift to Rule in November. Her seatmate, Joe Timmons (D) (52.73%), is leading more comfortably against Kamal Bhachu (R) (47.14%)
- 45th Legislative District (Kirkland, Duvall, and Sammamish): Incumbent Larry Springer (D) (49.32%) faces a democrat-vs-democrat race with Melissa Demyan (D) (47.86%).

Congressional:

- U.S. Senator: Incumbent Maria Cantwell (D) (57.18%) and Dr. Raul Garcia (R) (21.13%) advance out of the eleven-candidate primary to the General Election.
- Congressional District 3 – U.S. Representative: In a rematch of the 2022 election, incumbent Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D) (45.86%) will see Joe Kent (R) (39.31%) in the General Election.
- Congressional District 4 – U.S. Representative: Jerrod Sessler (R) (33.06%) takes the

lead ahead of Incumbent Dan Newhouse (R) (23.37%).

- *Congressional District 5 – U.S. Representative:* In an 11-person Primary, former State Senator Michael Baumgartner (R) (27.46%) and Carmela Conroy (D) (18.3%) take the lead for the open seat.
- *Congressional District 6 – U.S. Representative:* Current Senator for the 26th Legislative District, Emily Randall (D) (34.34%) will face current Senator for the 35th Legislative District, Drew MacEwen (R) (30.18%) in the General Election.
- *Congressional District 10 – U.S. Representative:* Incumbent Marilyn Strickland (D) (54.25%) will advance to the General along with Don Hewett (R) (27.72%).

Initiatives: As previously reported, three Initiatives to the Legislature will appear on the November ballot: [Initiative 2109](#), repealing the capital gains tax; [Initiative 2117](#), prohibiting carbon tax credit trading and repealing provisions of the 2021 Washington Climate Commitment Act; and [Initiative 2124](#), allowing all employees to opt out of paying and receiving long-term care insurance. In addition, [Initiative 2066](#) has qualified for the November ballot. The initiative is a direct counter to the Legislature approving [House Bill 1589](#) during the 2024 Legislative Session, which requires Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to engage in a multi-year planning process to reduce its use of natural gas to serve customers and comply with the State’s Clean Energy Transformation Act, which mandates that PSE get to zero carbon emissions by 2045.

The Washington State Supreme Court recently made a decision regarding the disclosure of financial impacts for initiatives on the November ballot. This decision upholds a lower court's ruling that required "public investment impact disclosures" to be presented alongside the measures. As reported previously, the ruling came after legal challenges from Republican Party leaders who argued against these disclosures, claiming the measures did not meet the legal criteria for such statements. However, the court rejected these arguments, emphasizing the importance of transparency for voters.

The court's decision is based on a 2022 law that mandates disclosure statements of 15 words or less on ballots if a measure repeals, levies, or modifies a tax or fee and causes a net change in state revenue. The Attorney General’s Office reviews the initiative to determine whether there’s a budget impact. If so, it crafts a summary that must follow protocol outlined in [RCW 29A.72.027](#). Each of the four initiatives (I-2109, I-2117, I-2124 and I-2066) will include a short fiscal impact disclosure statement. The Office of Financial Management has developed a more detailed fiscal impact memo for each of the initiatives. This information will be used to develop the statements included on the ballot. Click [here](#) to view the memos.

Additional State Issues of Interest:

Asylum Seeker Assistance: The Legislature appropriated \$32 million to support services for asylum seekers through the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA). In July, ORIA awarded \$16.4 million to 23 different contractors to establish a “hub and spoke” model. The [International Rescue Committee](#) was also allocated \$4.6 million to operate a “Newcomer Reception and Navigation Hub” that is envisioned to connect new arrivals with emergency housing, legal aid, and case management services.

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) hosted a discussion on refugees and asylum-seekers with the Governor’s Office, ORIA, and numerous local leaders in August. Much of the discussion focused on the state’s goal to develop a coordinated response with a new migrant

and asylum-seeker support pilot project that utilizes national, statewide, and local organizations and distributes grants to participating communities and organizations. The pilot project would provide a Newcomer Navigation and Reception Hub, emergency and transitional housing, legal services, and culturally responsive case management services. The ORIA's presentation about the pilot program and other refugee and asylum-seeker information can be found [here](#).

Collective Bargaining: The Washington Federation of State Employees (WSFE) has planned a [walkout](#) for all state employees as they continue to negotiate on union contracts for the 2025-27 biennium. The federation is negotiating contracts on behalf of several bargaining units that collectively represent 50,000 state government, higher education and public service employees. Formal discussions with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) on new collective bargaining agreements began in the spring and are planned to continue nearly every week through the end of September. Any agreements are supposed to be ratified by union members by October 1 for funding consideration in the next two-year budget.

With the [recent revenue forecast](#) showing a dip in expected collections, the Legislature has a difficult decision ahead as they strive to balance the fiscal realities with the state's needs, policy priorities, and the critical role employees fill in serving the public.

Pension Funding Council and LEOFF 2 Board: The Pension Funding Council (PFC) and Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System 2 (LEOFF 2) Board have adopted new contribution rates for the 2025-27 biennium. These rates, however, are not official until the 2025 Legislature votes to adopt them as part of the new biennial state budget. Historically, the Legislature has accepted the PFC and LEOFF 2 Board recommendations. To learn more and review the recommended rates, click [here](#).

Emerging Legislative Proposals: With the 2025 Legislative Session nearing, there has been an increase of internal discussions amongst legislators and stakeholders on various policy concepts that impact city government. Below are a few that are expected to develop into legislation in some form during the 2025 session:

- **Unhoused Bill of Rights:** It is expected that legislation will be introduced to codify *Martin v. City of Boise*. A proposal is likely to include language allowing regulation of homeless encampments if shelter is available in the community, similar to the limitations outlined in *Martin v. City of Boise*. Prior to the US Supreme Court decision being issued to [overturn City of Grants Pass v. Johnson](#), there was a similar effort in 2021, [House Bill 1576](#). In a similar vein, Oregon has already [adopted statewide legislation](#).
- **Transitional Housing Siting:** [House Bill 2474](#), sponsored by Representative Strom Peterson (D, 21st Legislative District) during the 2024 legislative session, allows a project permit applicant or developer who is seeking to construct permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, indoor emergency housing, or indoor emergency shelters to request that the Department of Commerce facilitate resolution of disputes with a city. Representative Peterson plans to re-introduce the bill for the 2025 legislative session. The bill passed the House of Representatives 55-42 but stalled after a public hearing in the Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs Committee.
- **Regulation of Electric Security Alarm Fences:** During the last two sessions, the Legislature considered but did not adopt [House Bill 1304](#), preempting cities' authority to regulate electric security alarm fences. Rather than approving the bill, \$50,000 was allocated in the 2024 Supplemental Operating Budget for the Department of Labor and

Industries to identify appropriate pathways to streamline the permitting processes for electric security alarm fences. In July, the department convened the first stakeholder meeting. One concept that was discussed at the meeting was the potential for a statewide regulation to be put in place, but that cities could at any time adopt a local ordinance that overrides the statewide regulation, regardless of whether that regulation is more stringent than the statewide regulation. The reasoning behind this structure is that it would expedite the installation of electric security alarm systems while still allowing communities to have a local conversation if they desired. The department will convene subsequent meetings and make recommendations to the Legislature in mid-December.

Bellevue State Legislative Agenda Development: Intergovernmental Relations staff have been working with internal departments and community partners to identify likely state-level issues of interest and opportunity for the City to outline in its draft 2025 State Legislative Agenda for Council's consideration. Staff are planning to meet with Council in late September to gather their input and direction and will bring a draft agenda to Council for discussion and consideration in October.