

March 25, 2026

RE: SF4223 – Senate Omnibus Elections Bill

Dear Chair Carlson, Vice Chair Westlin, Ranking Member Koran, and Members of the Senate Elections Committee,

Counties appreciate the diligent work of the committee in the past session around elections issues and the input you've sought from local election officials.

We offer the following points of input on the Senate Omnibus Elections Bill (SF4223, as amended by the A5 delete-all amendment).

- 1) **Economic Interest Statements**—We understand the committee's interest in expanding the scope and application of Economic Interest Statements (EIS). As testified to before, all county commissioners submit these. Our hesitancy to the changes in this bill relates to the expansion of these requirements to local officials (appointed staff).

As with prior testimony, we would respectfully posit that the importance of EIS is the application to people who are making the final, and major, budget and policy decisions on behalf of the public: the elected officials. We respect the committee's duty to balance public desire for information as well as the ability for us to recruit talented individuals in an already tough workforce environment. Measures like these could have potential chilling effects on individuals knowing they may have to submit personal economic information on themselves and their family members that have nothing to do with their jobs nor the eventual decisions the elected bodies they work for will ultimately make. We ask for consideration that this proposal to be applied to only elected officials.

- 2) **Address Security**—Firstly, we fully understand the intent of these provisions to provide additional security to candidates and elected officials in relation to filings made to the state and local units of government. Any resulting protections will be the result of thoughtful discussions among members of the Legislature to balance safety and the public desire for information.

However, we would like to point out the potential workload and timing challenges in some of these provisions. For example, Article 2, Section 22 requires removing filings from our websites, omitting now nonpublic and private data, and then reposting the filings all within six months of this bill becoming law. This timeframe will create different amounts of work for counties and cities, but all will need to be completing this work during the busiest part of an election year with a deadline likely no later than November. Similarly, other sections of this article will result in new Affidavits of Candidacy potentially during the candidate filing period which may result in confusion.

- 3) **Voting Process and Election Judge Protections**—We appreciate the provisions in this bill that increase the criminal penalty and possible civil penalty for violations of intimidation and interference with the voting process or of election officials in the performance of their duties. These measures provide a level of added security and also may help in the recruitment and retention of election officials (staff and election judges).
- 4) **Prohibiting the pre-filling of absentee ballot applications.** We support the eventual inclusion of Vice Chair Westlin’s bill to prohibit the pre-filling of third party absentee ballot applications. We have submitted a separate, joint letter outlining reasons for our joint support of this commonsense measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on SF 4223, as amended by the A5 delete-all amendment, and the opportunity to collaborate with you throughout session.

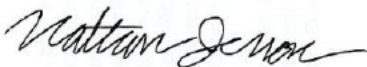
Best,



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