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SENATE BILL 5956

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State of Washington                      65th Legislature                      2017 2nd Special Session

By Senators Hasegawa, Baumgartner, and Chase

1            AN ACT Relating to prohibiting the use of superdelegates;  
2 amending RCW 29A.56.050; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4            NEW SECTION.            **Sec. 1.**            The legislature finds that the  
5 presidential election, including the selection process leading up to  
6 it, is one of the most important opportunities for citizens across  
7 the state and the country to engage in the American democratic  
8 experience. During this quadrennial process, civic engagement in  
9 government and public policy is at its highest, as voters carefully  
10 deliberate over which candidate is best qualified to lead our nation.  
11 However, the legislature finds that this process risks being  
12 subverted by the advent of so-called superdelegates. These unpledged  
13 electoral convention delegates are chosen by virtue of their position  
14 or political connections, and their vote is removed from any  
15 connection or accountability to the will of the people. Such  
16 unchecked authority risks the candidate of the party elites being  
17 nominated over the clear preference of everyday voters. The  
18 legislature thus finds that the ability of superdelegates to command  
19 influence over the final selection of a political party's  
20 presidential candidate represents an undemocratic end run around the  
21 political process.

1           Therefore, it is the legislature's intent that all delegates be  
2 bound to the results of the party's caucus or primary process and  
3 that superdelegates be prohibited.

4           **Sec. 2.** RCW 29A.56.050 and 2003 c 111 s 1405 are each amended to  
5 read as follows:

6           (1) A major political party (~~may, under national or state party~~  
7 ~~rules,~~) must base the allocation of all delegates from this state to  
8 the national nominating convention of that party in whole (~~or in~~  
9 ~~part~~) on either the (~~participation in~~) results of precinct  
10 caucuses and conventions conducted under the rules of that party or  
11 the results of the presidential preference primary under RCW  
12 29A.56.020.

13           (2) If requested by a major political party, the secretary of  
14 state shall adopt rules under RCW 29A.04.620 to provide for any  
15 declaration required by that party.

16           (3) Voters who subscribe to a specific political party  
17 declaration under this section must be given ballots that are readily  
18 distinguishable from those given to other voters. Votes cast by  
19 persons making these declarations must be tabulated and reported  
20 separately from other votes cast at the primary and may be used by a  
21 major political party in its allocation of delegates under the rules  
22 of that party.

23           (4) For a political party that requires a specific voter  
24 declaration under this section, the secretary of state shall  
25 prescribe rules for providing, to the state and county committees of  
26 that political party, a copy of the declarations or a list of the  
27 voters who participated in the presidential nominating process of  
28 that party.

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