

House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

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HB25-1315 Vacancies in the General Assembly

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Russell Weisfield Amend themselves	While I wholly support changing how General Assembly vacancies are filled, I strongly object to limiting candidates or voters to a particular party. This is wholly un-democratic. We elect people to the General Assembly, not corporations - which the political parties ultimately are. A person who resigns at some point after winning an election by demonstrating a willingness to buck the party, may have drawn a coalition across party lines that would not otherwise vote for a candidate of a particular party. Therefore, no reason exists to limit the choice for the vacancy.
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Celeste Landry Amend League of Women Voters of Colorado	<p>The League of Women Voters of Colorado is asking for amendments to HB25-1315 regarding vacancies in the General Assembly.</p> <p>LWV is pleased that the bill sponsors want to hold an election rather than allow a vacancy committee appointment to serve more than one year. However, LWV is asking that the bill be amended in 3 ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Allow any elector, regardless of party, to run in the special vacancy election as long as they meet the qualifications to serve in the legislative office,2) Allow every elector in the legislative district to vote in the special vacancy election, and3) Use a better voting method to reduce vote-splitting when there are more than 2 candidates running in the special vacancy election. <p>Opening up the vacancy election to all candidates and all voters, regardless of party, is the way all special elections currently operate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether they are held off-cycle to fill a vacancy in the US House of Representatives, as we saw with Ken Buck resigning last year ... or ...• Whether the special election is held on cycle in the next even-year November after an elected official vacates their seat early in their 4- or 6-year term.

	<p>Democracy is defined as a system of government by the whole population. In practice, we have some limitations based on citizenship, age and so forth, and an election to choose a political party's nominee may restrict who can cast a ballot based on party.</p> <p>However, any election to fill an elected office should be open to every elector, regardless of party. When some voters are denied the right to vote, it's called voter disenfranchisement. Colorado doesn't stand for voter disenfranchisement. The Colorado Voting Rights Act doesn't stand for voter disenfranchisement. The U.S. Constitution doesn't stand for voter disenfranchisement. Denying some electors the right to vote for their state rep or state senator is, in fact, a violation of Section 2 of the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution.</p> <p>Once all voters and candidates are allowed to participate in the vacancy elections, the question of what voting method to use comes up. Primary elections in even years serve to winnow the candidate field, and ensure that candidates represent different parties – BUT with no primary election, all the candidates would run against each other. If the election uses choose-one plurality voting and there are two popular, but similar, candidates, those two candidates could split the vote and allow the least popular candidate to win. The solution is to use a better, more expressive voting method, such as the simple-to-adopt-and-audit approval voting.</p> <p>In conclusion, please support the 3 amendments that the League of Women Voters proposes for this bill.</p>
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