

1 APPROVED:
2 EFFECTIVE:

3
4 SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
5 Snohomish County, Washington

6
7 ORDINANCE NO. 26-023

8
9 AN ORDINANCE PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE SNOHOMISH
10 COUNTY CHARTER ESTABLISHING A MANDATORY CANDIDATE POLITICAL
11 HISTORY DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT FOR THE OFFICES OF COUNTY
12 EXECUTIVE AND COUNTY COUNCIL

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14 WHEREAS, Snohomish County voters have elected a Charter Review
15 Commission to review the charter and propose charter amendments as provided
16 in Article 8 of the Snohomish County Charter; and

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18 WHEREAS, the Charter Review Commission submitted five (5) charter
19 amendment proposals to the Council on May 29, 2026; and

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21 WHEREAS, Article 8 of the Snohomish County Charter provides for
22 charter amendment proposals to originate from the County Council through
23 passage of an Ordinance with four (4) affirmative votes by the members; and

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25 WHEREAS, ordinances proposing charter amendments are not subject to
26 the veto power of the County Executive; and

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28 WHEREAS, the County Council wishes to require all candidates for the
29 offices of County Executive and County Councilmember to provide a political
30 history disclosure statement at the time of declaration of candidacy; and

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32 WHEREAS, the amendment adds a section to Article 4 of the Snohomish
33 County Charter requiring disclosure of a candidate's political history;

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35 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED:

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37 Section 1. Pursuant to Section 8.80 of the Snohomish County Charter,
38 the County Auditor, as the officer in charge of holding elections, is directed to
39 submit to the voters of Snohomish County, for their approval or rejection, at the
40 general election to be held on November 3, 2026, a proposition amending the
41 following sections of Snohomish County Charter:
42

43 **New Section**

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45 **Section 4.16 – Candidate Political History Disclosure**

46 (1) Purpose. Voters have a right to know the political histories of candidates
47 for County Executive and County Council. This section requires that such
48 histories, drawn from objective public records, be disclosed by candidates and
49 compiled and published by the County in official voter materials, regardless of
50 whether these offices are partisan or nonpartisan at the time of any given
51 election.

52 (2) Candidate Political History Disclosure Statement. Each candidate for
53 County Executive or County Council shall file a sworn Candidate Political History
54 Disclosure Statement with the County Auditor at the time of declaration of
55 candidacy. The Statement shall disclose, to the best of the candidate's
56 knowledge, based on the candidate's personal knowledge and publicly available
57 records, for the twelve (12) years immediately preceding the filing date:

58 a. Any political party preference designated on any declaration of
59 candidacy filed with the Washington Secretary of State or any county
60 auditor;

61 b. Any formal endorsement received from a recognized political party,
62 county party central committee, or state party organization;

63 c. Any service as a precinct committee officer of a recognized political
64 party; and

65 d. Any contribution of five hundred dollars (\$500) or more made to a
66 recognized political party, a county or state party central committee, or a
67 political action committee primarily associated with a recognized political
68 party, as required to be reported to the Washington Public Disclosure
69 Commission. The Statement does not require disclosure of voter
70 registration history, current political affiliation or belief, or any party
71 association not documented in a filed declaration of candidacy or a PDC-
72 reported contribution within the lookback period. Nothing in this section
73 compels a candidate to characterize, explain, or disclaim any item
74 disclosed.

75 (3) County-Compiled Public Record Disclosure. In addition to the candidate-
76 filed Statement, the County Auditor shall independently compile, from publicly
77 available records of the Washington Secretary of State and the Washington
78 Public Disclosure Commission, the information described in subsections (2)(a)
79 and (2)(d) for each candidate.

80 The County shall publish both the candidate-filed Statement and the
81 independently compiled record under the heading "Candidate Political History" in
82 the official county voters' pamphlet and on the county elections website, no later
83 than the date primary ballots are mailed, or such earlier date as implementing
84 ordinances may establish. Each candidate's published entry shall follow a
85 uniform template applied identically to all candidates for the same office in the
86 same election cycle.

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88 No later than seven (7) days before the publication deadline, the County Auditor
89 shall provide each candidate with a copy of the county-compiled record as it will
90 appear in published voter materials.

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92 A candidate who believes the county-compiled record contains a factual
93 inaccuracy may submit a written correction request to the County Auditor within
94 five (5) business days of receipt. The County Auditor shall review and adjudicate
95 the request within three (3) business days and shall correct any confirmed factual
96 error before publication. Where a correction request raises a genuine factual
97 dispute that cannot be resolved before the publication deadline, the item shall be
98 published with a notation that the candidate has submitted a written correction
99 request regarding that item. Implementing ordinances shall establish an
100 administrative appeal process for candidates whose correction requests are
101 denied. The process shall provide for an expedited prepublication appeal to be
102 decided no later than three (3) business days before the publication deadline. A
103 candidate who prevails on appeal before the publication deadline shall have the
104 confirmed correction reflected in the published record. A candidate who prevails
105 after publication shall have the correction published in the next available official
106 voter communication for that election cycle.

107 (4) Disclosure Not Determinative. Nothing in this section limits who may run
108 for, or hold the offices of, County Executive or County Council. The disclosures
109 required by this section are for voter information purposes only. A candidate's
110 political history, or the absence of any such history, shall not constitute a
111 qualification or disqualification for office.

112 (5) Application Regardless of Partisan Status. The requirements of this
113 section apply whether the offices of County Executive and County Council are
114 designated partisan or nonpartisan at the time of any election. This section is
115 designed to operate concurrently with any future charter amendment designating
116 these offices as nonpartisan. It is the intent of the voters in adopting this section
117 that political history disclosure requirements shall remain in effect regardless of
118 changes to the partisan status of these offices. This section is not repealed by

119 implication by any future amendment addressing only the partisan or nonpartisan
120 designation of these offices.

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122 If this section and an amendment designating the offices of County Executive or
123 County Council as nonpartisan are adopted by voters at the same election, both
124 amendments shall take effect according to their respective terms. This section
125 shall be construed to operate concurrently with any such nonpartisan designation
126 amendment, and neither amendment shall be deemed to repeal or supersede the
127 other. In the event of any direct conflict between the two amendments as
128 adopted, the amendment receiving the higher number of affirmative votes shall
129 control only as to the specific conflicting provision.

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131 (6) Implementing Ordinances. The County Council shall adopt implementing
132 ordinances within 90 days of the effective date to:

133 a. Establish the form and submission process for the Candidate
134 Political History Disclosure Statement;

135 b. Establish penalties for knowing or intentional material
136 misrepresentation in a filed Statement, provided that no penalty shall
137 apply to an omission or error that the candidate demonstrates was not
138 knowing or intentional and does not materially mislead voters; provided
139 further that no penalty shall apply to any item disclosed under subsections
140 (2)(b) or (2)(c) unless the candidate's filed Statement affirmatively and
141 falsely states that no such endorsement or service existed, and the county
142 has independently corroborated the misrepresentation through a public
143 record;

144 c. Specify the uniform template and standardized format for
145 publication in voter materials, consistent with subsection (3);

146 d. Address any technical conflicts with state election administration
147 law consistent with the purpose of this section;

148 e. Define "recognized political party" for purposes of this section by
149 reference to RCW 29A.04.086 and any additional party qualified to appear
150 on the Washington state primary ballot by action of the Secretary of State
151 and specify whether organizations that do not meet the statutory vote
152 threshold are included within the scope of subsections (2)(b), (2)(c), and
153 (2)(d); and

154 f. Establish the procedures and deadlines for the pre-publication
155 candidate review-and-correction process described in subsection (3),
156 including the process for resolving disputed items and a timely right of
157 administrative appeal before the publication deadline. The penalty
158 provisions under subsection (6)(b) apply to all items in the candidate-filed
159 Statement; the County acknowledges that items under subsections (2)(b)
160 and (2)(c) are self-reported and cannot be independently compiled from
161 state public records. Nothing in this section shall be construed to modify,
162 replace, or conflict with any requirement of the state-administered
163 declaration of candidacy process under RCW 29A.20.040 or any other
164 provision of Title 29A RCW.

165 All references in this section to the Washington Public Disclosure Commission
166 and its reporting requirements refer to Title 29B RCW and any successor
167 statutes.

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169 Section 2. The Clerk of the Council shall certify this proposition to the
170 County Auditor for submission to the voters in substantially the following form,
171 subject to such additions, deletions, or modifications as may be required by the
172 Prosecuting Attorney:

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174 The Snohomish County Council adopted Ordinance No. 26-____
175 proposing an amendment concerning the political history of
176 candidates. This amendment would require a Candidate Political
177 History Disclosure for all candidates to the offices of the County
178 Executive and the County Council and for the disclosures to be
179 independently confirmed by the County Auditor and made available
180 to the public through the Voter's Pamphlet.

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182 Should this proposition be enacted into law:

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184 YES.

185 NO

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187 Section 3. If the proposition provided for in this ordinance is approved by
188 a majority of the voters voting on the issue the amendment shall be effective ten
189 days after the results of the election are certified, as provided in Section 8.50 of
190 the Snohomish County Charter.
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PASSED by vote of ___ yeas to ___ nays this ___ day of June, 2026.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

Chairperson

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Council

() APPROVED

() EMERGENCY

() VETOED

DATE: _____

County Executive

ATTEST:

Approved as to form only:

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney