

C-38	Voting Requirements for Amendments Proposed by Charter Review Commission	O'Leary	Article 8 New Section 8.55
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Requires a 2/3 majority vote by the Charter Review Commission to advance a proposed Amendment to the ballot.

Sponsor of Proposal

Commissioner Jerome O'Leary, District 1

Brief Summary of Proposal:

This amendment requires a two-thirds vote of the full Charter Review Commission to place any final proposed charter amendment on the ballot, ensuring that proposals reflect broad, bipartisan consensus before submission to voters.

Proposed Charter Amendment:

Article 8, New Section 8.55

(1) Purpose.

The Charter Review Commission shall conduct its work in a manner that promotes consensus-building, nonpartisan deliberation, and consideration of the full diversity of Pierce County, including both urban and rural communities. Because this Charter is the County's foundational governing document, amendments submitted to the voters should, to the greatest extent possible, reflect broad agreement among commissioners and inclusion of differing perspectives.

(2) The Charter Review Commission may propose amendments to this Charter for submission to the voters as provided herein.

(3) Voting Requirement.

The final vote taken by the Charter Review Commission to advance any proposed amendment to the ballot for voters shall require the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the total membership of the Charter Review Commission.

Rationale for Proposal:

This proposal is intended to strengthen the integrity and public trust of the Charter review process by encouraging meaningful consensus-building within the Commission.

As a commissioner, I have observed proposals advance on simple majority votes with limited incorporation of minority viewpoints and limited evidence of consensus-building. While disagreement is expected, the Charter is the County's foundational governing document, making it especially important that proposed amendments reflect broad agreement.

The 21-member Charter Review Commission is a nonpartisan body, and as such should work to encourage meaningful consensus-building across differing perspectives. Pierce County includes both urban and rural communities with diverse viewpoints. Requiring a two-thirds vote for any amendment ensures that proposals placed before voters reflect broad support across the Commission and encourages collaboration, thoughtful deliberation, and inclusion of all voices.

By establishing a consistent two-thirds voting requirement, this amendment promotes more durable, widely supported Charter amendments and reinforces the Commission's role as a model for consensus-driven governance.

DPA Review of Proposal

Date:
4/16/2026

Proposal No.:
C-38

Topic:
Vote requirement for Charter amendments

DPA:
Katie Blinn

Legal Review:

The proposal requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Charter Review Commission in order to advance a proposed amendment to a vote of the people. This change is likely within the authority of a charter county.

Other Feedback/Comments/Recommendations:

The Charter provides three methods for proposed amendments to be submitted to the people. Amendments may be proposed by:

1. The Charter Review Commission (Sections 8.40 – 8.50)
2. The County Council (Section 8.60) or
3. The people by petition (Section 8.65)

Amendments proposed by the Council similarly must be approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Council (see Section 8.60). Rather than creating a new section in the Charter for this proposal, consider adding it to existing Section 8.40, which addresses procedures for the Commission.

Summary Points

- The State and US Constitutions require a 2/3 majority.
- Currently a simple majority will change our County Charter.
- This allows for partisan and activist proposals to advance on simple majority where they will still only require a simple majority to become law.

Submit written testimony

By Email: katey.hobbs@piercecountywa.gov

By Web Form: <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/FormCenter/Charter-Review-41/Provide-Written-Public-Comment-893>

Submitted public testimony

Names in **RED** = CON

Names in **GREEN** = PRO

As of 4-10-26 = **1 CON** ~ **0 PRO**

Packet
