

C4	Vacancies in Office	Serad	Article 4, Section 4.7.2
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Seeks to strip party control of appointments to partisan offices that have been vacated. It inserts strict timelines and processes creating an administrative minefield clearly designed to avert party control if one tiddle is missed.

Sponsor of Proposal

Commissioner Troy Serad, District 5, Position 2.

Brief Summary of Proposal:

This proposal establishes time-limited procedures and clarifies the process for filling vacancies in partisan and nonpartisan County offices. It sets firm deadlines for submission of party lists and Council appointments, establishes a ministerial lottery for partisan vacancies if the Council fails to act, and assigns the Prosecuting Attorney as a neutral backstop to appoint qualified individuals for nonpartisan vacancies in the event of Council inaction.

Proposed Amendment:

Article 4 Elections, Section 4.7 Vacancies, Subsection 2. New text in red. **Please see Exhibit A & Exhibit B.**

(2) The Council shall fill a vacancy in a partisan office by appointment from a list of three people submitted by the County central committee of the major party represented by the official in office immediately prior to the declaration of vacancy. For unanticipated vacancies where a list cannot be provided prior to the declaration of vacancy, a list shall be submitted within thirty (30) days after the vacancy occurs. Failure to submit a list in the specified times shall constitute a forfeiture of the opportunity to submit and the vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as a nonpartisan office. In the event this official was elected from a non-major party, or stated no party preference, the vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as a nonpartisan office. The Council shall fill a vacancy in a nonpartisan office within forty-five (45) days of declaration of vacancy by appointment from applicants responding to a public request for applications for the vacant nonpartisan office. If the Council fails to make an appointment to fill a partisan vacancy within fifteen (15) days after a declaration of vacancy or the timely receipt of a submitted list, whichever is later, the appointment shall be made the next business day by random lot from the submitted list, administered by the Auditor as a ministerial act and deemed an appointment of the Council. If the Council fails to make an appointment to fill a nonpartisan vacancy within forty-five (45) days of the declaration of vacancy, or in the case of a vacancy that becomes subject to the nonpartisan process due to failure to submit a list of names, within the time remaining before sixty

(60) days from the declaration of vacancy, the Prosecuting Attorney shall, on the next business day, select from the public applications. Such selection shall constitute an appointment of the Council and shall occur no later than 60 days after the declaration of vacancy.

Rationale for Amendment:

The proposal ensures timely and transparent filling of County elective offices while safeguarding local public interests. Without the proposal, vacancies could remain unfilled for extended periods due to Council deadlocks or party inaction, undermining continuity of government and public trust. By imposing deadlines and a lottery mechanism, the proposal preserves local control by ensuring appointments are completed before any statutory trigger for gubernatorial intervention. It places a check on party influence and encourages the submission of high-quality partisan candidates—failure to act now results in random selection, limiting manipulative actions that seek to install a preferred candidate. The Council retains its privilege to select for appointment the major party’s first-ranked candidate. For nonpartisan vacancies, using the Prosecuting Attorney as a neutral backstop maintains continuity of government while preserving the integrity of Council appointment authority. Overall, the proposal prioritizes the public trust, reduces partisan gamesmanship, and strengthens accountability in County governance.

Summary Points

- Weakens party authority in offices explicitly chosen through partisan elections.
- Disregards the will of voters who selected a candidate aligned with a party.
- Turns vacancies into procedural traps with rigid timelines.
- Introduces artificial administrative hurdles designed to disrupt party continuity.
- Subverts representative government by minimizing the role of political association.
- The Charter should preserve voter intent, not dilute it.

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 3-17-26 = **5 CON** - **0 PRO**

2-18-26 Packet

From: john@thetruthpage.org

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 4:10 PM

Subject: Amendment C-4

I object to Amendment C-4 sponsored by Commissioner Troy Serad

This proposal seeks to strip the party authority over partisan offices that the current charter respects. Offices that are partisan are exactly that and trying to subvert the very nature of those offices is actually subverting the will of the people by their choices in partisan races. The amendment turns the unfortunate condition of a vacancy into an administrative mine field of timelines and requirements even devolving to pulling a name out of a hat.

The will of the people should reign supreme and this amendment flies in the face of that.

Sincerely,

John Leslie

***** Note Mr. Anderson commented on multiple proposed Amendments. The commentary for each will be associated to their specific Amendment *****

From: jonwayne@comcast.net

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 11:20 AM

Subject: Charter Review Proposed Amendments

Mr. Fletcher,

I am writing as a concerned Pierce County resident to strongly oppose the proposed amendments C-1 through C-5, as outlined in the February 9th packet (particularly the chart on page 93 and detailed proposals on pages 94–104). These changes appear designed to undermine the elected Sheriff's independence, dilute voter authority, inject controversial state policies into our local Charter, and shift power away from democratic processes toward executive or unelected control.

1. **Amendment C-1 (Article III, Section 3.70 – Sheriff):** This amendment inserts language mirroring SB 5974, imposing new qualifications on the Sheriff. While professional standards for law enforcement are important, embedding state-level mandates into our County Charter risks overriding voter choice in electing our chief law enforcement officer. Sheriffs are constitutional officers accountable directly to the people through elections—not to state boards or unelected bodies. This change could enable removal or disqualification based on external criteria, eroding local democratic control. I oppose any effort to limit who voters can choose for this critical role.

2. **Amendment C-2 (Section 1.20 – Intergovernmental Relations):** This proposal seeks to embed principles from the Keep Washington Working Act into the Charter, which limits local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement and has been criticized for prioritizing non-enforcement over public safety and federal law compliance. Our Charter should not be used to lock in one-sided immigration policies that could hinder law enforcement's ability to address serious crimes or coordinate with federal authorities when necessary. Pierce County residents deserve Charter language that supports impartial, safety-focused governance— not ideological restrictions on intergovernmental cooperation.

3. **Amendment C-3 (Article 4, Section 4.7 – Grounds for Removal):** This amendment adds specific grounds for removal from office, seemingly targeted at the Sheriff, while allowing the County Executive to appoint a replacement. Creating tailored removal mechanisms for an elected official circumvents established processes like recall elections or judicial removal. It concentrates too much power in the Executive branch and threatens the separation of powers. Voters, not the Executive, should hold elected officials accountable.

4. **Amendment C-4 (Article 4, Section 4.7 – Vacancies):** By imposing strict timelines and processes for filling vacancies in partisan offices, this change strips political parties of their traditional role in appointments when seats are vacated mid-term. This could disenfranchise voters who elected officials under a party banner and opens the door to manipulation if minor procedural errors occur. Maintaining party input ensures continuity and respects the partisan nature of these offices as chosen by voters.

5. **Amendment C-5 (Article 4, Section 4.7 – Vacancies/Executive Control):** This proposal grants the Executive direct control over the Sheriff upon any accusation— without due process or voter input. This is an alarming power grab that could paralyze the Sheriff's office based on unproven claims, undermining law enforcement stability and independence. Accusations alone should never trigger executive takeover of an elected constitutional office.

These amendments weaken the elected Sheriff's authority, reduce voter influence, import divisive state policies, and shift power to the Executive branch. The Charter should protect democratic accountability, local control, and the separation of powers—not erode them. I urge the Commission to reject C-1 through C-5 in their entirety and preserve the current structure that ensures the Sheriff remains directly accountable to Pierce County voters.

Thank you for considering public input.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Anderson
9005 19th Ave E Tacoma, WA 98445
Pierce County Resident

From: Laurie Layne

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 10:04 AM

Subject: C-4

This discourages the involvement of a party in a partisan vacancy. Not for that, as that party represents our interests and concerns best or we would not allow them to represent us. Sounds too much like the proverbial camel's nose under the tent analogy, leading to undo control over this process as well. Thank you.

From: nancy anderson <peachyn@live.com>

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 9:34 AM

Subject: 6 proposed amendments to the charter

Since we cannot attend tonight's meeting, we would like to go on record as against all 6 proposed amendments—they are definitely taking our county in the wrong direction and are not properly dealing with the issues of most import. Please reconsider passing any of these. Robert and Nancy Anderson, District 3

***** Note Lisa commented on multiple proposed Amendments. The commentary for each will be associated to their specific Amendment *****

From: Lisa Sauve <lisa98446@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 7:37 AM
To: Katey Hobbs <katey.hobbs@piercecountywa.gov>
Subject: 6 Amendments up for review at this weeks meeting

Dear Katey,
I would like my position to be registered as noted below on the 6 amendments up for review at this week's Charter Review meeting.

Amendment C-1

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: Voters determine fitness for office - not partisan amendments. Also, singling out the Sheriff undermines equal treatment under the law.

Amendment C-2

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: The Charter is a framework for governance, not a platform for ideological statements. Intergovernmental coordination must respect federalism and constitutional hierarchy.

Amendment C-3

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: This amendment expands removal authority beyond the constitutional presumption of innocence and it undermines voter sovereignty by bypassing electoral accountability.

Amendment C-4

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: This amendment weakens party authority in offices explicitly chosen through partisan elections. It also disregards the will of voters who selected a candidate aligned with a party.

Amendment C-5

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: This amendment undermines separation of powers within county government and it subverts the will of voters who elected the Sheriff.

Amendment C-6

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: This amendment the Charter derives authority from the electorate - citizens and legal voters and foundational documents must use exact legal language.

Thank you for recording my opposition to these Amendments. Please leave our elected Sheriff alone. He is doing his job and he is doing it well!

Sincerely,
Lisa Sauve
