

Pierce County Charter Review

Amendments C-1 ~ C-6 rebuttals

Commissioner Submissions					
No.	Revision	Submitted By	Date Received	Charter Section	Subject
C1		Commissioner Hunter			Sheriff
C2		Commissioner Rydell-Kelly		Charter Section 1.20	Intergovernmental Relations
C2	Rev. 1	Commissioner Rydell-Kelly	2/5/2026	Charter Section 1.20	Intergovernmental Relations
C3		Commissioner Serad	2/3/2026	Charter Sections 4.7.1 & 4.7.4	Vacancies
C4		Commissioner Serad	2/4/2026	Charter Section 4.7.2	Vacancies
C5		Commissioner Serad	2/5/2026	Charter Section 4.7(.5-New)	Vacancies
C6		Commissioner Rogge	2/4/2026	Preamble	Adding resident wording
TBD		Commissioner Ginn	2/4/2026	Charter Section 4.30	Residency Requirement

Amendment C-1 – Qualifications for Sheriff

Brief Summary of Proposal: This proposal amends the Pierce County Charter to establish minimum professional qualifications for the Sheriff, including law enforcement certification and supervisory experience, to ensure that the individual serving as Sheriff possesses the credentials, training, and leadership experience necessary to perform the duties of the office.

- The County Charter is not a vehicle for targeting a single elected office.
- If qualifications are necessary, they must be applied uniformly - not selectively.
- Singling out the Sheriff undermines equal treatment under the law.
- The Charter should remain structurally neutral, not politically reactive.
- Voters determine fitness for office - not partisan amendments.
- Embedding controversial state-level proposals into the Charter invites instability and politicization.

Amendment C-2 – Intergovernmental Relations (Keep Washington Working principles)

Brief Summary of Proposal This proposed amendment clarifies the nature and scope of Pierce County intergovernmental relations, affirming our government’s commitment to aiding our most vulnerable residents and following the Washington and US Constitutions, and recognizing 10th Amendment limitations on local government enforcement of immigration issues.

- The Charter is a framework for governance, not a platform for ideological statements.

- Injecting partisan policy preferences into foundational governing documents weakens neutrality.
- The Charter should define structure and authority - not political agendas.
- Intergovernmental coordination must respect federalism and constitutional hierarchy.
- Amending the Charter for symbolic positioning diminishes its seriousness.

Amendment C-3 – Grounds for Removal from Office

Brief Summary of Proposal: The proposal amends the Charter’s Vacancies section to clearly define when an elected County official is suspended or removed from office following serious criminal charges, and to specify how the powers and duties of the office are exercised during a suspension. It establishes new statute-based triggers for suspension, preserves continuity of County government, and clarifies interim authority while respecting the distinct legal treatment of the Prosecuting Attorney under State law.

- Expands removal authority beyond the constitutional presumption of innocence.
- Introduces vague standards like “under investigation” and “credible evidence.”
- Lowers the threshold from conviction to accusation.
- Creates opportunities for partisan abuse and weaponization.
- Undermines voter sovereignty by bypassing electoral accountability.
- Substitutes political maneuvering for due process.
- The current Charter already balances suspension and conviction appropriately.
- Stability in governance requires clear, objective standards - not subjective triggers.

Amendment C-4 – Vacancies in Partisan Offices

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.

- 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.

Amendment C-5 – Executive Control Over Sheriff

Brief Summary of Proposal: This proposal adds a new subsection to the Vacancies section authorizing limited, temporary oversight of Executive officers who are not the Executive when credible evidence indicates they are under investigation for serious misconduct or for matters that could result in loss of required certifications to hold office. Upon a Council finding by resolution, the Executive may require concurrence for non-routine decisions while the investigation is pending. It does not remove the official from office or create a vacancy.

- Consolidates excessive power in the Executive branch.
- Undermines separation of powers within county government.
- Allows vague accusations to trigger executive dominance.
- Erodes the independence of a separately elected constitutional officer.
- Subverts the will of voters who elected the Sheriff.
- Concentration of power is contrary to conservative principles of limited government.
- Structural safeguards exist precisely to prevent this type of overreach.

Amendment C-6 – Preamble (“Citizen” to “Citizen and Resident”)

This proposal acknowledges the importance of recognizing citizens in the preamble and adds “resident” to more accurately reflect the daily practice in county government.

- The Charter derives authority from the electorate - citizens and legal voters.
- “Resident” is broader and legally imprecise in a governing document.
- Foundational documents must use exact legal language.
- The preamble defines governmental authority - not general inclusivity.
- Precision protects the integrity of the Charter.
- Governance authority flows from voters, not undefined residency.