

THE MODIFIED BLANKET PRIMARY

a tradition of independence



Voters support a qualifying (modified blanket) primary

Office of the Secretary of State
February 2004

Public polling shows Washington voters clearly want a new primary that allows them to support the best candidate regardless of party and to keep their political party preferences private.

Elway Poll March 2001

- 75% of Washington voters do not want to be limited to voting for candidates of only one political party.
- 82% of Washington voters adamantly oppose to any disclosure of their political party preference.

Washington voters, by a nearly 2:1 margin, support a qualifying (modified blanket) primary over a Montana-style open primary. In a qualifying (modified blanket) primary, the top two candidates move to the general election ballot

Elway Poll December 2003

- 56% of Washington voters prefer a qualifying (modified blanket) primary.
- 30% of Washington voters prefer a Montana-style open primary in which voters choose a ballot of a single political party.

Washington voters, by a nearly 2:1 margin, view a Montana-style open primary as a “bad idea.”

- 68% of Washington voters view the Montana-style open primary as a “bad idea.”

(Read excerpts of the Elway Poll on the back page.)

The blanket primary excerpt from the December 2003 Elway Poll - continued

Another issue before the legislature this session will be the state's primary election method. There is a good chance that the U.S. Supreme Court will declare Washington State's primary election method to be unconstitutional, as they did in California last year. A new method is likely to be one of two alternatives.

- 1.1 One alternative would allow you to vote for candidates of any party in the September Primary as you do now. The difference would be that the top two vote-getters in the primary—regardless of party—would face each other in the general election. This means that two candidates of the same party could be on the final ballot, instead of one Democrat and one Republican, as is the case now.

Does this plan sound to you like a . . .	
A good idea	14%
An interesting idea that might work	29%
An interesting idea that probably would not work	18%
A bad idea	35%
Don't know /NA	3%

- 1.2 One other alternative would have voters choose a party ballot at the time you vote. For the September Primary election, your ballot would contain only the candidates of the party you selected. You would not be able to go back and forth between the parties from race to race as you do know.

Does this plan sound to you like a . . .	
A good idea	10%
An interesting idea that might work	10%
An interesting idea that probably would not work	6%
A bad idea	68%
Don't know/NA	5%

2. If you had to choose one or the other, would you prefer:

A. The method in which the top two vote-getters advance to the general election, regardless of party.	56%
B. The method in which Primary Election voters choose a ballot of a single party.	30%