

RCW 35.21.015 Salary commissions. (1) Salaries for elected officials of towns and cities may be set by salary commissions established in accordance with city charter or by ordinance and in conformity with this section.

(2) The members of such commissions shall be appointed in accordance with the provisions of a city charter, or as specified in this subsection:

(a) Shall be appointed by the mayor with approval of the city council;

(b) May not be appointed to more than two terms;

(c) May only be removed during their terms of office for cause of incapacity, incompetence, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office or for a disqualifying change of residence; and

(d) May not include any officer, official, or employee of the city or town or any of their immediate family members. "Immediate family member" as used in this subsection means the parents, spouse, siblings, children, or dependent relatives of the officer, official, or employee, whether or not living in the household of the officer, official, or employee.

(3) Any change in salary shall be filed by the commission with the city clerk and shall become effective and incorporated into the city or town budget without further action of the city council or salary commission.

(4) Salary increases established by the commission shall be effective as to all city or town elected officials, regardless of their terms of office.

(5) Salary decreases established by the commission shall become effective as to incumbent city or town elected officials at the commencement of their next subsequent terms of office.

(6) Salary increases and decreases shall be subject to referendum petition by the people of the town or city in the same manner as a city ordinance upon filing of such petition with the city clerk within thirty days after filing of the salary schedule. In the event of the filing of a valid referendum petition, the salary increase or decrease shall not go into effect until approved by vote of the people.

(7) Referendum measures under this section shall be submitted to the voters of the city or town at the next following general or municipal election occurring thirty days or more after the petition is filed, and shall be otherwise governed by the provisions of the state Constitution, or city charter, or laws generally applicable to referendum measures.

(8) The action fixing the salary by a commission established in conformity with this section shall supersede any other provision of state statute or city or town ordinance related to municipal budgets or to the fixing of salaries.

(9) Salaries for mayors and councilmembers established under an ordinance or charter provision in existence on July 22, 2001, that substantially complies with this section shall remain in effect unless and until changed in accordance with such charter provision or ordinance. [2001 c 73 s 4.]

Findings—Intent—2001 c 73: "The legislature hereby finds and declares that:

(1) Article XXX, section 1 of the state Constitution permits midterm salary increases for municipal officers who do not fix their own compensation;

(2) The Washington citizens' commission on salaries for elected officials established pursuant to Article XXVIII, section 1 of the state Constitution with voter approval has assured that the compensation for state and county elected officials will be fair and certain, while minimizing the dangers of midterm salary increases being used to influence those officers in the performance of their duties;

(3) The same public benefits of independent salary commissions should be extended to the setting of compensation of municipal elected officers; and

(4) This act is intended to clarify the intent of the legislature that existing state law authorizes:

(a) The establishment of independent salary commissions to set the salaries of city or town elected officials, county commissioners, and county councilmembers; and

(b) The authority of the voters of such cities, towns, and counties to review commission decisions to increase or decrease such salaries by means of referendum." [2001 c 73 s 1.]

Severability—2001 c 73: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2001 c 73 s 6.]