

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2118

As Reported By House Committee On:
Government Operations

Title: An act relating to election procedures.

Brief Description: Harmonizing various election procedures.

Sponsors: Representatives D. Schmidt, Scott, Blanton, Quall and Thompson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations: 1/19/96, 1/23/96 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Cairnes, Vice Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Conway; R. Fisher; Hargrove; Honeyford; Hymes; Mulliken; Scheuerman; D. Schmidt and Wolfe.

Staff: Scott White (786-7153).

Background: State laws provide for the administration of elections for cities, towns, and districts, including procedures, assignment of responsibilities, and scheduling.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The proposed legislation makes several changes relating to election procedures.

The county auditor is given the option of sending a notice confirming a voter's address either to the address indicated on the voter's permanent registration record or to any other address at which the auditor could reasonably expect mail to be received by the voter.

The county auditor is required to call a special election, at the request of the governing body of a city, town, or district and if the request is presented to the auditor at least 45 days prior to the proposed election date, whether or not an emergency exists. Furthermore, the bill removes the requirement from existing

statute that a county must deem an emergency to exist in order to call a county special election.

The filing officer may permit a candidate to withdraw from a city, town, or special district contest at any time before the contest, if no primary is required and if the election ballots have not yet been ordered. If a void in candidacy exists after such a withdrawal, then it is to be handled in the same manner as a lapse of election caused by no filing.

The requirement that a candidate's name shall not appear more than once on a ballot is amended to allow a person to run for precinct committee officer or any temporary office such as charter review board or freeholder, in addition to any position regularly nominated or elected at the same election.

A person loses status as an ongoing absentee voter if he or she is placed on inactive status.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill makes changes to the procedural requirements for a county calling a special election. Further changes are made regarding how a void in candidacy after withdrawal is to be handled. The substitute bill removes the sections of the original bill that maintained existing law requiring the auditor to send an application to receive a ballot to all inactive voters for any special election being conducted by mail.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The bill clarifies what happens if no one files for an office.

Testimony Against: A void in candidacy after a withdrawal should be handled in the same manner as a lapse of election caused by no filing. The state should maintain existing law requiring the auditor to send an application to receive a ballot to all inactive voters for any special election being conducted by mail.

Testified: Representative Dave Schmidt, prime sponsor; and Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County Auditor.