

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia Washington

BilAnalysis

BilNo. HB 1271

Establishment/commissioners/publichospitalists PublicArg: 2/5/97
Brieftitle

Reps.L.Thomas/Scott/DSommers
Sponsor

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BACKGROUND:

Hospital districts are municipal corporations authorized to provide hospital and other health care services, construct and operate hospitals and other health care facilities, and impose regular property taxes and excess levies to finance their activities and facilities.

A hospital district is governed by a board of commissioners consisting of three members who are elected to six-year staggered terms of office in each commissioner district. Each commissioner district must include approximately the same population. Commissioner districts are used for residency purposes where a commissioner from that commissioner district must reside in the commissioner district and at primary elections where only voters residing in the commissioner district may vote to nominate candidates from that commissioner district. However, voters throughout the entire public hospital district vote to elect commissioners.

The number of commissioners may be increased from three to five or seven if a ballot proposition providing for the increase is approved by a simple majority vote of voters voting on the proposition. If so approved, the additional commissioner districts are drawn and the additional commissioners are elected at the next state general election occurring 20 or more days after the ballot proposition is approved.

The board of commissioners may, by resolution, abolish the use of commissioner districts.

Continued

SUMMARY:

Changes are made to the election of public hospital district commissioners.

A newly created public hospital district may have three, five, or seven commissioners, who are elected using commissioner districts, without the use of commissioner districts, or a combination of three commissioner districts and the remainder elected without commissioner districts. The county commissioners of the county or counties in which the districts proposed to be located shall determine how the initial hospital district commissioners are elected. Provisions are made to stagger the terms of office.

The use of commissioner districts is altered so no longer use these districts as primary elections to nominate candidates from the district. Instead, voters throughout the entire public hospital district may vote at a primary to nominate candidates for the commissioner from any commissioner district.

Any public hospital district that has abandoned the use of commissioner districts may re-authorize the use of commissioner districts by ballot proposition or by authorizing commissioner districts approved by voters.

The additional commissioners in any public hospital district with five or seven commissioners are elected without the use of commissioner districts unless the board of commissioners adopts a resolution to have all but the five or seven commissioners elected using commissioner districts.

Whenever a public hospital district increases the number of its commissioners, the new positions are filled by appointment of the existing board of commissioners, as if vacancies existed, and the appointed commissioners serve until their successors are elected at the next district general election occurring at least 20 days after voters authorize the increase in the number of commissioners.

If, as the result of redrawing commissioner district boundaries, two or more commissioners reside in a single commissioner district, the commissioner with the shortest unexpired terms are appointed by the board to at-large positions or to commissioner districts where no commissioner resides.

No appointment of a vacant position or election to the board of commissioners of a public hospital district after June 9, 1994, and before the effective date of this act, shall be deemed invalid solely based upon the district's failure to redraw commissioner district boundaries.

FISCAL NOTE: Not requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bills passed.