

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5170

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to procedures for changing the names of school districts.

Brief Description: Changing provisions for school district name changes.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, McAuliffe, T. Sheldon, Deccio and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/29/99, 4/1/99 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- Allows a school district board to change the name of the school district without an election if it receives a petition, makes a motion to do so, and votes to do so after a public hearing.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Schindler, Republican Vice Chair; Carlson; Cox; Keiser; Rockefeller; Santos; D. Schmidt; Schual-Berke; Stensen and Wensman.

Staff: Charlie Gavigan (786-7340).

Background:

To change the name of a school district under current law, 10 percent of the registered voters in the district must petition the school board and submit a proposed new name. The school board accepts or rejects the petition. If the petition is rejected, the board's decision is final. If the petition is accepted, and after notice, the board holds a public hearing on the proposed name change; the board can consider other names at the hearing. The board selects a name to present to the voters at the

next special or general election. If a majority of the voters approve the proposed name change, the new name is recorded in the school district office and appropriate state officials are notified.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A school board may change the name of the school district if at least 10 percent of the district's registered voters submit a petition for a new name and the board passes a motion to hold a hearing to change the district name. After giving notice, the school board must hold a public hearing regarding the proposed name change within one month of receiving the petition. Other names may be proposed at the hearing. A majority of the board may approve a new name; an election is not required. If a new name is adopted, the new name must be recorded in the school district office and appropriate state officials must be notified.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Requires that both a petition and a school board motion take place to change the name of a school district under the new process (which does not require an election to change the name).

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will allow school boards to change the name of the school district without a vote of the people. The current system requires that any name change be approved at an election; this is a costly process that prevents changes that should be made.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, prime sponsor; and Carl Smith, citizen.