

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5718

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, March 3, 1999

Title: An act relating to cities and towns changing plans of government.

Brief Description: Changing plans of government for cities and towns.

Sponsors: Senators Gardner, Spanel, Patterson and Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/25/99, 3/3/99 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5718 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Hale, Haugen, Kline and McCaslin.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: When a noncharter code city changes its plan of government, the new city officers are all usually elected at the next general municipal election. All the city officers under the former plan of government must either run anew or no longer be in office. The term plan of government— includes the mayor-council, council-manager forms, and the commission form under some circumstances.

Whenever a city of 10,000 population or more receives a petition from the voters to become a charter code city, the city must call for an election on that question.

Summary of Substitute Bill: When a noncharter code city changes its plan of government, officers serve the remainder of their terms. If the change is from a mayor-council plan of government to a council-manager plan of government, the existing mayor serves as a council member for the remainder of his or her term. If the change is from a council-manager plan of government to a mayor-council plan of government, the new mayor is elected as part of the reorganization call for an election on that question. There is a two-year waiting period between elections on the question of charter adoption when the vote in favor was 40 percent or less of the total vote.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill did not address voting on the charter code city issue in cities of 10,000 population or more.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill prevents disruption of the continuity of city government and provides for change in an orderly fashion. Elections can cost from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Permitting a petition to require a vote without limit on the frequency of elections is an impossible financial burden for most cities.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Yvonne Goldsmith, Mayor, City of Ferndale; Ron Rosenbloom, AWC.