

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1369

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**As Passed House:**  
February 23, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to county elected officials keeping offices at the county seat.

**Brief Description:** Addressing county elected officials keeping offices at the county seat.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Local Government & Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Haler, Takko and Klippert).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Local Government & Housing: 2/2/09 [DPS].

**Floor Activity**

Passed House: 2/23/09, 92-0.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Authorizes certain county officials to keep their main offices at a location other than the county seat, provided they maintain an office at the county seat.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Simpson, Chair; Nelson, Vice Chair; Angel, Ranking Minority Member; Cox, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ericksen, Miloscia, Short, Springer, Upthegrove, White and Williams.

**Staff:** Sara del Moral (786-7291)

**Background:**

The general legal framework by which Washington's 39 counties must operate is found within the state Constitution. The Constitution includes provisions for county organization, governance, and elected officials, including the establishment of county clerks, sheriffs, and treasurers.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

With some exceptions, the specific powers and duties of elected county officials are prescribed in statute. For example, state law obligates superior court clerks, county sheriffs, county treasurers, and county road engineers to keep their offices at their county seats.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

At the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners, the superior court clerk, the sheriff, the county treasurer, and the county road engineer may keep main offices at a location other than the county seat, provided he or she maintains an office at the county seat.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Benton County has located offices in the Tri-Cities to better serve the large population there. The law should change so the county can be in compliance. People should not have to drive long distances to get county services. This bill would allow counties to provide better and more efficient service to constituents.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Haler; and Leo Bowman, Benton County.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.