

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SJR 8215

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As of January 25, 1996

**Brief Description:** Amending the Constitution to provide for a simple majority of voters voting to authorize school district levies.

**Sponsors:** Senators Gaspard, Winsley, McAuliffe, C. Anderson, Kohl and Bauer; by request of Washington State School Directors Association, Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 2/21/95, 2/24/95 [DP, DNP]; 1/26/96.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** The Washington State Constitution gives school districts the authority to levy local property taxes, if the voters of the district approve the levy. Such approval requires at least 60 percent of those voting to vote "yes," and the voter turnout must be at least equal to 40 percent of the voter turnout at the previous general election. If the voter turnout is less than 40 percent of the previous general election turnout, the measure can still be approved if the number of those voting "yes" equals at least 60 percent of the number that represents 40 percent of the previous general election turnout.

Approval for a school district to issue bonds for capital purposes requires at least 60 percent of those voting to vote "yes," and the voter turnout must be at least equal to 40 percent of the voter turnout at the previous general election.

To amend the Constitution, an amendment must be passed by two-thirds majority of both houses and approved by a majority vote of the people.

**Summary of Bill:** An amendment to the Washington State Constitution is proposed to allow a simple majority of voters voting to approve school district levy and bond issues. The 60 percent super-majority and the 40 percent voter turnout requirements are eliminated.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** Upon approval by a majority vote of the people at the general election in November.