

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6690

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, February 3, 2000

Title: An act relating to independent commissions to set salaries for city and town mayors and councilmembers, and county commissioners and councilmembers.

Brief Description: Clarifying authority for counties, cities, and towns to create independent salary commissions.

Sponsors: Senators McCaslin and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 1/27/2000, 2/3/2000 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6690 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Roger Brodniak (786-7445)

Background: The Washington Citizen's Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was created by initiative in 1986. The commission establishes salaries for state-elected officials. Members are appointed: (1) by both chambers of the Legislature with the approval of the Governor; and (2) at random from each of the nine congressional districts. There is no explicit statutory authorization in the RCW for independent salary commissions for city or county elected officials.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Independent salary commissions are created to establish salaries for mayors and council members in charter cities or towns. Commission members are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council.

Independent salary commissions for county commissioners and council members are also created for charter and noncharter counties. There are ten members on county salary commissions. Six members are selected at random by the county auditor from the list of registered voters in the district. The remaining four members are appointed by the county commissioners, or by a majority vote of the board of commissioners. These four members must represent the following sectors of the county: legal, professional personnel, organized labor, and business.

Members may not serve more than two terms on the commission, and may not be an immediate family member of a city or county employee.

Changes in salary adopted by the commission become effective and are incorporated into the city or county budget without further action of the city or county council. Salary increases become effective immediately, while salary decreases become effective when the current official's term of office has ended.

Any increase or decrease in salary is subject to a referendum petition by the people of the city or county, and may be submitted to the voters in the next general or municipal election.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill does not specify the number of members on a salary commission. It also allows members to be directly appointed by county commissioners. The original bill contains an emergency clause.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill clarifies the authority for cities and counties to do what they likely already have the right to do.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Mark Brown; Ted Gathe, City of Vancouver.