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HOUSE BILL 1121

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State of Washington                      56th Legislature                      1999 Regular Session

By Representatives Pennington, Mielke and Dunshee

Read first time 01/14/1999. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

1            AN ACT Relating to initiative and referendum powers in counties;  
2 and adding new sections to chapter 36.32 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 36.32 RCW  
5 to read as follows:

6            (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the  
7 voters of any county that does not operate under a home rule charter  
8 shall possess the direct legislative powers through initiative and  
9 referendum on any matter within the scope of the powers, functions, or  
10 duties of the county.

11            (2) Ordinances of such a county shall become effective thirty days  
12 after their adoption, and are subject to a referendum petition being  
13 filed during the interim, except:

14            (a) Ordinances initiated by petition;

15            (b) Ordinances necessary for immediate preservation of public  
16 peace, health, and safety or for the support of county government and  
17 its existing public institutions which contain a statement of urgency  
18 and provide that the ordinance becomes effective either immediately  
19 upon adoption or at a date less than thirty days after its adoption;

- 1 (c) Ordinances providing for road improvement districts, local
- 2 improvement districts, or utility local improvement districts;
- 3 (d) Ordinances appropriating money;
- 4 (e) Ordinances providing for or approving collective bargaining;
- 5 (f) Ordinances providing for the compensation of or working
- 6 conditions of county employees; or
- 7 (g) Ordinances authorizing or repealing the levy of taxes.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 36.32 RCW  
9 to read as follows:

10 Initiative petitions proposing the adoption of an ordinance must be  
11 signed by county registered voters equal in number to at least twenty  
12 percent of the number of county voters voting at the last state general  
13 election and may not be circulated for more than one hundred eighty  
14 days. Referendum petitions must be signed by county registered voters  
15 equal in number to at least fifteen percent of the number of county  
16 voters voting at the last state general election and must be filed with  
17 the county auditor no later than 5:00 p.m., thirty days after the  
18 ordinance that is being subjected to referendum was adopted. The  
19 petitions shall be filed with the county auditor who shall review the  
20 signatures and certify the sufficiency of the signatures. If it  
21 appears that the same registered voter signed the petitions more than  
22 once, only the first signature shall be counted.

23 The county auditor shall notify the county legislative authority if  
24 the initiative petitions are certified as having sufficient valid  
25 signatures and the county legislative authority shall either adopt the  
26 proposed ordinance, as proposed, or shall cause the initiative to be  
27 submitted to county voters for their approval or rejection at the next  
28 state general election occurring forty-five or more days after the  
29 petitions were certified as having sufficient valid signatures.

30 If the referendum petitions are certified as having sufficient  
31 valid signatures, the ordinance that is being subjected to referendum  
32 shall not become effective, shall be held in abeyance, and shall be  
33 submitted to the county voters for their approval or rejection at the  
34 next state general election that occurs forty-five or more days after  
35 the petitions were certified as having sufficient valid signatures.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 36.32 RCW  
37 to read as follows:

1 Each initiative petition shall include the text of the proposed  
2 ordinance and shall indicate that an initiative is being proposed.  
3 Each referendum petition shall include the text of the ordinance that  
4 is proposed to be subjected to referendum and shall indicate that a  
5 referendum is being proposed.

6 Each petition shall include numbered lines and provide space on  
7 each numbered line for a voter to sign the petition, print his or her  
8 name, insert his or her residential address, and indicate the date he  
9 or she signed the petition. Each petition shall include the warning  
10 that:

11 "Every person who signs this petition with any other than his  
12 or her true name, knowingly signs more than one of these  
13 petitions, signs this petition when he or she is not a  
14 registered voter residing in the county, or makes any false  
15 statement on the petition may be punished by fine or  
16 imprisonment or both."

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 36.32 RCW  
18 to read as follows:

19 An ordinance that is submitted to voters as a initiative measure,  
20 or that is referred to voters as a referendum measure, shall be adopted  
21 if approved by a simple majority vote of county voters voting on the  
22 ballot measure. Unless the ordinance provides for a differing  
23 effective date, an ordinance that is approved by county voters shall  
24 become effective on the date the results of the election are certified  
25 that voters approved the ordinance.

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