

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2375

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government, Elections & Information Technology

Title: An act relating to state reimbursement of election costs in even-numbered years.

Brief Description: Addressing state reimbursement of election costs in even-numbered years.

Sponsors: Representatives McDonald, Fey, Johnson and Muri.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 1/17/18, 1/23/18 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the state to pay its prorated share of election costs in even-numbered years, according to a specified payment schedule.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; McDonald, Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregerson, Irwin, Johnson and Pellicciotti.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Kraft, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

The state must pay a prorated share of the cost of any primary or general election in odd-numbered years when state officers or measures are on the ballot. The county auditor determines the state's share of election costs and files for reimbursement with the Secretary of State. The county assumes the state's cost during even-numbered years, except when a

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primary or vacancy election is held to fill a vacancy for the position of United States (U.S.) Senator or U.S. Representative.

Summary of Bill:

The state must pay its prorated share of the cost of any primary or general election in even-numbered years when state officers or measurers are on the ballot, according to a specified payment schedule. The payment schedule requires the state to pay 25 percent of its prorated share of election costs in 2020, increasing by 10 percent every even-numbered year up to 100 percent in 2036. Beginning in 2036, the state must pay 100 percent of its prorated share of election costs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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) The state does not currently pay its share of election costs in even-numbered year elections. The bill is not requiring the state to pay anything that is not attributable to the state. It is hard for counties to budget, and every time the state does not participate in funding its activities, the county eats the related costs. This makes it hard to manage the county budget, especially in presidential election years. Thirteen counties cannot provide 24-hour sheriff coverage because of their budgets. Every time local governments have to pay something out of the general fund for elections, it takes away from public safety, mental health, and other services. This bill is a step in the right direction. The bill provides for a front-ended payment from the state for 25 percent of its share of costs. It will ease some pressure on local governments and address a problem that has been raised for a number of years.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Irwin; Julie Anderson, Washington State Association of County Auditors; and Josh Weiss, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.