

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5268

As of January 29, 2019

Title: An act relating to the salaries of county sheriffs.

Brief Description: Concerning the salaries of county sheriffs.

Sponsors: Senator Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Local Government: 1/29/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the annual salary of each sheriff to be at least equal to the salary provided to the prosecuting attorney of the same county.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: The legislative authority of a county may establish the salaries of its elected officials. The minimum salary thresholds are established by statute and differ according to county population and specific position.

For example, in counties with a population of one million or more, the salaries of the auditor, clerk, treasurer, sheriff, members of the county legislative authority, and coroner may not be less than \$18,000, and \$19,000 for the assessor. However, for counties with a population of between 210,000 and 1 million, the minimum salary amount for the auditor, clerk, treasurer, assessor, and coroner is \$17,600, and \$19,500 for the sheriff and members of the county legislative authority. No minimum salary threshold is established for the elected prosecuting attorney.

Summary of Bill: The annual salary of each sheriff may not be less than that provided to the prosecuting attorney of the same county.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill is a request from the Thurston County Sheriff. This bill levels the playing field in law enforcement. Not all sheriffs are complaining about their wages. This bill increases fairness and consistency across the state. This bill will assist in our succession planning by removing the obstacle of lower salaries for this position. Sheriffs are sometimes paid less than their first line supervisors. It is difficult to convince the next generation of potential leaders to run for election because they know they will have to take a \$27,000 pay cut.

CON: This bill interferes with local decision-making and is an unfunded mandate. Unlike the prosecutor salary, the sheriff salary is not subsidized by the state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sam Hunt, Prime Sponsor; John Snaza, Thurston County Sheriff; Casey Salisbury, Mason County Sheriff.

CON: Mellani McAleenan, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.