
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

HB 1727

Brief Description: Concerning odd-numbered year elections.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregerson, Entenman, Bateman, Macri, Peterson, Ramos, Simmons, Harris-Talley and Frame.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the statewide general election in odd-numbered years.
- Permits elections in odd-numbered years in limited circumstances, including special elections and local government elections for entities that choose to maintain odd-numbered-year elections until 2028.
- Provides that elected officials whose term is scheduled to expire before the next general election is held shall continue to serve until the next general election.
- Eliminates or modified references to general elections in odd-numbered years throughout the code.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

Every November, the state holds a statewide general election. In years that end in an even number, the election includes general elections for federal, state, and county officers, as well as state or local ballot measures such as initiatives, referenda, and constitutional amendments.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In years that end in an odd number, general elections are held for city, town, and special district officers (subject to a few exceptions). In addition, odd-year elections may include elections for:

- federal, state, and county officers, state legislators, supreme court justices, and superior court judges to fill the remainder of unexpired terms;
- county officers in a county governed by a charter that provides for odd-year elections; and
- state ballot measures.

State ballot measures must appear on the ballot at the next regular general election, and therefore they may appear in either even- or odd-numbered years. Special elections and recall elections also may occur in either even- or odd-numbered years.

Summary of Bill:

The statewide general election in odd-numbered years is eliminated. Elections are permitted in odd-numbered years only for:

- county, city, town, and special district general elections before the year 2028, unless the entity chooses to switch to even-numbered years before then;
- special elections called for any purpose authorized by law;
- elections for recall of a public officer;
- public utility districts, conservation districts, or district elections at which property ownership is a prerequisite to voting;
- consolidation proposals and non-high capital fund aid proposals; and
- special flood control districts consisting of three or more counties.

Whenever the application of this act results in a situation in which the term of office of an elected official is scheduled to expire but a general election for that office has not yet been held, the elected official shall continue to serve until a successor is elected and qualified. (For example, a city councilmember elected in 2019 whose term is scheduled to expire at the end of 2023 shall continue to serve that term until reelected or replaced in the 2024 election.)

References to elections in odd-numbered years throughout the code are eliminated or modified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2022.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2023.