

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1932

As of February 13, 2024

Title: An act relating to shifting general elections for local governments to even-numbered years to increase voter participation.

Brief Description: Shifting general elections for local governments to even-numbered years to increase voter participation.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Gregerson, Farivar, Peterson, Alvarado, Berry, Ramel, Stearns, Mena, Bateman, Reed, Simmons, Ormsby, Macri, Street, Orwall, Goodman, Berg, Lekanoff, Reeves, Nance, Riccelli and Fosse).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/8/24, 52-45.

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 2/16/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits cities, towns, and certain special purpose districts to choose to hold their elections in even-numbered years instead of odd-numbered years.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Staff: Greg Vogel (786-7413)

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.

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

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.

include elections for:

- filling the remainder of unexpired terms for federal, state, and county officers; state legislators; supreme court justices; and superior court judges;
- 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: Cities, towns, and certain special purpose districts may choose to hold their elections in even-numbered years instead of odd-numbered years. To select this option, the legislative body of the jurisdiction may adopt an ordinance or policy, or voters may approve an ordinance or charter amendment referred by the legislative body. A city, town, or special purpose district moving its elections through adoption of an ordinance or policy by its legislative body must hold two public hearings at least 30 days apart to consider public input, and a final vote may not occur sooner than 30 days after the second hearing.

If a jurisdiction chooses to switch its elections to even-numbered years, the term lengths of officers elected in the next odd-year election must be one year shorter than provided by law. The choice to switch must be adopted before January 15th of an odd-numbered year to take effect in that election cycle. A jurisdiction that chooses to switch back to odd-numbered year elections must transition back with similarly shortened terms.

Appropriation: None.

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.