

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5723

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As of February 8, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to giving cities and towns the freedom to switch their general elections to even-numbered years to take advantage of higher and more diverse voter turnout.

**Brief Description:** Giving cities and towns the freedom to switch their general elections to even-numbered years.

**Sponsors:** Senators Valdez and Kuderer.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State Government & Elections: 2/10/23.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Authorizes and sets procedures for cities and towns to hold their regular elections in even-numbered years.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

**Background:** Every November, the state holds a statewide general election. In even-numbered years, the election includes general elections for federal, state, and county officers. In odd-numbered years, general elections are held for city, town, and special district officers, with a few exceptions, as well as elections to fill any vacancies. State and local ballot measures such as initiatives, referenda, and constitutional amendments can appear on the ballot in any year.

**Summary of Bill:** Cities and towns may choose to hold their regular elections in even-numbered years.

Administrative Procedures. A move to even-year elections may be done by passage of an

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ordinance or voter approval of a referendum. If the city or town chooses to pass an ordinance to move to even-year elections, it must hold two public hearings at least 30 days apart to consider public input. The city or town may not vote to adopt the ordinance until at least 30 days after the second public hearing. A city or town's adoption of even-year elections is irrevocable.

Transition to Even-Year Elections. To transition to even-year elections, the city or town must elect all its positions to one term is that is one year shorter than it would ordinarily be. After the conclusion of that term—in an even-numbered year—future terms for that position will be at their customary length. The ordinance or referendum must specify at which odd-year election positions will be elected to shortened terms.

The ordinance or referendum switching to even-year elections must be adopted by January 15th for elections for shortened terms to take place in that calendar year.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 7, 2023.

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

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