

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2089

*As Passed House
March 13, 1991*

Title: An act relating to the date of the presidential preference primary.

Brief Description: Fixing the date of the presidential primary.

Sponsor(s): By House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Anderson, Bowman, Pruitt, Grant, R. Fisher, Ferguson, R. Johnson and Franklin).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, March 6, 1991, DPS;
Passed House, March 13, 1991, 61-36.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
STATE GOVERNMENT**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 2089 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 7 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Pruitt, Vice Chair; Bowman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; R. Fisher; Grant; O'Brien; and Sheldon.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 3 members: Representatives McLean, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler; and Moyer.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: With the adoption in 1989 of Initiative to the Legislature No. 99, the Legislature established a presidential preference primary in this state. Unless the date is changed by the secretary of state, the presidential primary is to be held on the fourth Tuesday in May of each presidential election year. The secretary is authorized to select another date for this primary to advance the concept of a regional primary.

Two of the dates specified by law on which local special elections may be conducted are the fourth Tuesday in May and the first Tuesday after the first Monday in April.

Summary of Bill: The date of the state's presidential primary is changed to the fourth Tuesday in March. The authority of the secretary of state to change the date on which this primary may be conducted to advance the concept of a regional primary is repealed.

The first Tuesday after the first Monday in April may continue to be used for local special elections except in a presidential election year. In such a year, this special election date is moved to the fourth Tuesday in March, the date of the presidential primary.

The date on which special elections may be conducted for local governments during the month of May is changed to the third Tuesday from the current presidential primary date, the fourth Tuesday in May.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: If the presidential primary is held on the fourth Tuesday in May, the nomination of presidential candidates may already have been decided nationally. In such a case, a very expensive primary with no consequences would be conducted and few people would likely participate.

Testimony Against: (1) Initiative to the Legislature No. 99 had a great deal of public support; it should be permitted to work. (2) The public supported the concept of a regional primary. The authority of the secretary of state to change the primary date for this purpose provides more flexibility in accomplishing this objective than is provided by the bill. (3) By the time the bill becomes law, the primary dates in other, heavily populated states may be changed to the date given in this bill. If that happens, presidential candidates would not likely visit this state.

Witnesses: Representative Anderson (in favor); and Ralph Munro, Secretary of State (opposed).