

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6493

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As Passed Senate, February 16, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to costs of elections.

**Brief Description:** Changing provisions relating to responsibility for costs of elections.

**Sponsors:** Senators Horn, Kastama, Roach, Haugen and Esser.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/3/04 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/16/04, 48-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Berkey, Fairley, Horn and McCaslin.

**Staff:** Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

**Background:** Cities, towns, and special purpose districts are responsible for their proportionate share of election costs. In odd-numbered year elections, the state is responsible for its share of costs related to state officers and measures on the ballot. The state pays no costs in even-year elections.

In determining shares of elections costs, some counties will first calculate costs related to state officers and measures, factor those costs out and then proration the remaining costs among the jurisdictions with races or issues on the ballot. This effectively means the county assumes the costs related to state races or issues. Other counties will not deduct state costs prior to prorationing. This effectively spreads the costs associated with state races and issues among all jurisdictions with races or issues on the ballot.

**Summary of Bill:** Costs associated with statewide races and measures in even-numbered years must be borne by the county. Cities, towns, and special purpose districts costs shall not include any costs associated with the election of statewide officers or ballot measures.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2004.

**Testimony For:** This bill would prevent counties from passing state election costs to cities and special purpose districts. The counties have to run the elections anyway, so cities or districts with races or issues on the ballot should just be responsible for an incremental cost.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Horn, prime sponsor; NEUTRAL: Kim Wyman, WA State Association of County Auditors.

**House Amendment(s):** The House hung HB 2438 on the bill, which allows a noncharter code city to submit a change of government proposal to the voters at the next general election. The requirement that the change of government proposal be voted on at a general election held within 180 days or at a special election is eliminated.