

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5271

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, January 31, 2008

Title: An act relating to modifying the dates on which a special election may be held.

Brief Description: Modifying when a special election may be held.

Sponsors: Senators Pridemore, Benton, Kline, Swecker, Roach and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/01/07, 2/13/07 [DPS];
1/29/08, 1/31/08 [DP2S].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5271 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Kline, McDermott, Pridemore and Swecker.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: The county auditor, upon receiving a request from the county, city, town, or district, may call a special election to be held on one of the following dates: the first Tuesday after the first Monday in February; the second Tuesday in March; the fourth Tuesday in April; or the third Tuesday in May.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Second Substitute): The March and April special elections are eliminated. The special election in May is changed from the first Tuesday to the second Tuesday. A technical change is made to the day of the May special election in section 1 to match the same day in section 2.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended Second Substitute): The delayed start date of July 1, 2009 is removed and the date of the special election in May is changed to the second Tuesday. It had been the first Tuesday in the first substitute.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended First Substitute): The substitute makes a technical change to the day of the May special election in section 1 of the bill so it matches the day in section 2.

Appropriation: None.

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

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2008.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Second Substitute Bill: PRO: This is an important bill. When you have an election nearly every month as in some of the smaller counties, housekeeping becomes a real issue. The purpose of this bill is to have one election in February, one in May, one in August, and one in November. This should allow the election administrators time to do the work they need to do and should save money. There is a real crunch currently that makes it very difficult to update voter registrations between elections. There will be an amendment to change the dates to the second Tuesday in February and the second Tuesday in May. We support the move to two dates but are still working to decide which two dates are the best for everyone involved.

CON: One solution is to keep four elections and spread them out further. There are two main sources of funding for education; one is the state Legislature and the other is local elections school districts can hold. Our concern is if we take away two of the four special election dates all tax issues will be on the same two ballots and will thus be competing with each other. Our worry is that our levies will be able to pass with a simple majority but education bonds need a super majority to pass. We are working with the auditors and other interested parties but we continue to have concerns.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Greg Kimsey, Washington Association of County Auditors; Corky Mattingly, Yakima County Auditor; Sam Reed, Secretary of State; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors Association; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

CON: Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.