S-0556.1

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**SENATE BILL 5252**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Mullet, Wellman, Palumbo, and Randall

AN ACT Relating to school district elections; amending RCW 28A.535.020, 28A.535.030, 28A.535.050, 84.52.056, and 39.36.020; and providing a contingent effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.535.020 and 1996 c 48 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

Whenever the board of directors of any school district shall deem it advisable to validate and ratify the indebtedness mentioned in RCW 28A.535.010, they shall provide therefor by resolution, which shall be entered on the records of such school district, which resolution shall provide for the holding of an election for the purpose of submitting the question of validating and ratifying the indebtedness so incurred to the voters of such school district for approval or disapproval, and if at such election ((~~three-fifths~~)) fifty-five percent of the voters in such school district voting at such election shall vote in favor of the validation and ratification of such indebtedness, then such indebtedness so validated and ratified and every part thereof existing at the time of the adoption of said resolution shall thereby become and is hereby declared to be validated and ratified and a binding obligation upon such school district.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.535.030 and 2015 c 53 s 16 are each amended to read as follows:

At the time of the adoption of the resolution provided for in RCW 28A.535.020, the board of directors shall direct the school district superintendent to give notice to the county auditor of the suggested time and purpose of such election, and specifying the amount and general character of the indebtedness proposed to be ratified. Such notice must identify the major projects to be constructed and estimated amount required for such projects to be constructed with the indebtedness proposed to be ratified. Such notice must also include estimates of other funds available to support those major projects. Any such identification of projects or estimation of costs is solely for the purpose of informing voters and is not intended to restrict the actual use of bond proceeds. Upon completion of all construction projects financed with the indebtedness so ratified, the school district superintendent must publish a final report describing the actual uses of such funds. Such superintendent shall also cause written or printed notices to be posted in at least five places in such school district at least twenty days before such election. In addition to his or her other duties relating thereto, the county auditor shall give notice of such election as provided for in RCW 29A.52.355.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.535.050 and 1984 c 186 s 14 are each amended to read as follows:

If the indebtedness of such school district is validated and ratified, as provided in this chapter, by ((~~three-fifths~~)) fifty-five percent of the voters voting at such election, the board of directors of such school district, without any further vote, may borrow money and issue and sell negotiable bonds therefor in accordance with chapter 39.46 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 84.52.056 and 2010 c 115 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Any municipal corporation otherwise authorized by law to issue general obligation bonds for capital purposes may, at an election duly held after giving notice thereof as required by law, authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds for capital purposes only, which does not include the replacement of equipment, and provide for the payment of the principal and interest of such bonds by annual levies in excess of the tax limitations contained in RCW 84.52.050 to 84.52.056, inclusive and RCW 84.52.043. Such an election may not be held more often than twice a calendar year, and the proposition to issue any such bonds and to exceed the tax limitation must receive the affirmative vote of a three-fifths majority of those voting on the proposition and the total number of ((~~persons~~)) voters voting at the election must constitute not less than forty percent of the voters in the municipal corporation who voted at the last preceding general state election, except that a proposition by a school district to issue such bonds and to pay the principal and interest on the bonds by annual tax levies shall be authorized by receiving the affirmative vote of fifty-five percent of the voters voting on the proposition.

(2) Any taxing district has the right by vote of its governing body to refund any general obligation bonds of said district issued for capital purposes only, and to provide for the interest thereon and amortization thereof by annual levies in excess of the tax limitations provided for in RCW 84.52.050 to 84.52.056, inclusive and RCW 84.52.043.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "bond" includes a municipal corporation's obligation to make payments to the state in connection with a financing contract entered into by the state by or on behalf of a municipal corporation under chapter 39.94 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 39.36.020 and 2000 c 156 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as otherwise expressly provided by law or in subsections (2), (3) and (4) of this section, no taxing district shall for any purpose become indebted in any manner to an amount exceeding three‑eighths of one percent of the value of the taxable property in such taxing district without the assent of three‑fifths of the voters therein voting at an election to be held for that purpose, nor in cases requiring such assent shall the total indebtedness incurred at any time exceed one and one-fourth percent on the value of the taxable property therein.

(2)(a)(i) Public hospital districts are limited to an indebtedness amount not exceeding three-fourths of one percent of the value of the taxable property in such public hospital districts without the assent of three-fifths of the voters therein voting at an election held for that purpose.

(ii) Counties, cities, and towns are limited to an indebtedness amount not exceeding one and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property in such counties, cities, or towns without the assent of three-fifths of the voters therein voting at an election held for that purpose.

(b) In cases requiring such assent counties, cities, towns, and public hospital districts are limited to a total indebtedness of two and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property therein. However, any county that has assumed the rights, powers, functions, and obligations of a metropolitan municipal corporation under chapter 36.56 RCW may become indebted to a larger amount for its authorized metropolitan functions, as provided under chapter 35.58 RCW, but not exceeding an additional three-fourths of one percent of the value of the taxable property in the county without the assent of three-fifths of the voters therein voting at an election held for that purpose, and in cases requiring such assent not exceeding an additional two and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property in the county.

(3) School districts are limited to an indebtedness amount not exceeding three-eighths of one percent of the value of the taxable property in such district without the assent of ((~~three-fifths~~)) fifty-five percent of the voters therein voting at an election held for that purpose. In cases requiring such assent school districts are limited to a total indebtedness of two and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property therein.

(4) No part of the indebtedness allowed in this chapter shall be incurred for any purpose other than strictly county, city, town, school district, township, port district, metropolitan park district, or other municipal purposes: PROVIDED, That a city or town, with such assent, may become indebted to a larger amount, but not exceeding two and one-half percent additional, determined as herein provided, for supplying such city or town with water, artificial light, and sewers, when the works for supplying such water, light, and sewers shall be owned and controlled by the city or town; and a city or town, with such assent, may become indebted to a larger amount, but not exceeding two and one-half percent additional for acquiring or developing open space, park facilities, and capital facilities associated with economic development: PROVIDED FURTHER, That any school district may become indebted to a larger amount but not exceeding two and one-half percent additional for capital outlays.

(5) Such indebtedness may be authorized in any total amount in one or more propositions and the amount of such authorization may exceed the amount of indebtedness which could then lawfully be incurred. Such indebtedness may be incurred in one or more series of bonds from time to time out of such authorization but at no time shall the total general indebtedness of any taxing district exceed the above limitation.

The term "value of the taxable property" as used in this section shall have the meaning set forth in RCW 39.36.015.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect if the proposed amendment to Article VII, section 2 of the state Constitution (S-0557/19) providing for approval by fifty-five percent of voters voting to authorize school district bonds is validly submitted to and is approved and ratified by the voters at the next general election and certified by the secretary of state. If the proposed amendment is not approved, ratified, and certified, this act is void in its entirety.

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