

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5082

As of January 6, 2023

Title: An act relating to encouraging electoral participation and making ballots more meaningful by abolishing advisory votes.

Brief Description: Encouraging electoral participation and making ballots more meaningful by abolishing advisory votes.

Sponsors: Senators Kuderer and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 1/10/23.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Repeals the requirement that advisory votes for tax increase legislation appear on the ballot and voters' pamphlet.
- Requires that summaries of operating, capital, and transportation budgets, a pie chart showing state budgeted expenditures by object for the most recent biennium, and a table charting state and local expenditures relative to personal income appear in the voters' pamphlet in even-numbered years.
- Requires that the Office of Financial Management produce fiscal impact statements for legislation impacting state revenues and make it available online.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Advisory Votes. Advisory votes were established in 2008 with the enactment of Initiative 960. Through an advisory vote, voters advise the Legislature

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

whether to repeal or maintain a tax increase enacted by the Legislature. The results of advisory votes are nonbinding and do not result in a change to the law.

A measure for an advisory vote by the people must be placed on the next general election ballot if a legislative bill raising taxes is not referred to the voters or contains an emergency clause, bonds or contractually obligates taxes, or otherwise prevents a referendum. If the bill involves multiple revenue sources, each is subject to a separate advisory vote.

Voters' Pamphlet. The Secretary of State must print and distribute a voters' pamphlet to each household in the state, public libraries, and other locations the Secretary of State deems appropriate whenever a statewide ballot measure or office, including an advisory vote, is scheduled to appear on the general election ballot. For advisory votes, the voters' pamphlet must include:

- the measure's short description;
- a ten-year cost projection of the measure by the Office of Financial Management (OFM), including an annual breakdown;
- the names and office contact information of legislators; and
- how legislators voted on the tax increase legislation.

For each initiative and referendum on the ballot, OFM, in consultation with the Secretary of State and Attorney General, must prepare a fiscal impact statement describing any increase or decrease in state revenues, costs, expenditures, or indebtedness. The statement must include both a summary of up to 100 words and a more detailed statement of the assumptions made to develop the fiscal impacts.

Summary of Bill: Advisory Votes. The requirement that advisory votes for tax increase legislation appear on the ballot at the subsequent general election is repealed.

Voters' Pamphlet. Information on advisory votes is not required to be printed in the voters' pamphlet. In even-numbered years, the voters' pamphlet must also include:

- summaries of 300 words or less for each of the most recently adopted operating, transportation, and capital budgets and supplemental budgets;
- a pie chart prepared by the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program showing budgeted expenditures by areas of government over the previous biennium;
- tables prepared by OFM comparing state and local expenditures per \$1,000 of personal income over the preceding 20 years; and
- instructions on how to find fiscal impact statements prepared by OFM for measures impacting state revenues.

Fiscal Impact Statements. OFM, in consultation with the Secretary of State, Attorney General, and other appropriate agencies, must prepare fiscal impact statements for each bill that impacts state tax revenues. Statements must be available by July 23. Fiscal impact statements must be clear and concise descriptions of the bill which describe the increase or decrease in state or local revenues, costs, or spending. Fiscal impact statements must

include a summary of no more than 250 words, and more detailed information as necessary. Fiscal impact statements must be made available on OFM and legislative websites.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 5, 2023.

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

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