

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1794

---

*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Local Government*

**Title:** An act relating to public hospital districts.

**Brief Description:** Concerning public hospital districts elections.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Bray, Mitchell, Haugen and Ferguson.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Local Government, March 6, 1991, DP.

---

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**Majority Report:** *Do pass.* Signed by 15 members: Representatives Haugen, Chair; Cooper, Vice Chair; Ferguson, Ranking Minority Member; Mitchell, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Edmondson; Franklin; Horn; Nealey; Nelson; Rayburn; Roland; Wood; Wynne; and Zellinsky.

**Staff:** Bill Lynch (786-7092).

**Background:** All candidates for public hospital district commissioner are voted upon by the entire district. The statutes which govern the creation of public hospital commissioner districts are unclear. Generally, there must be three commissioners and three commissioner districts. Not more than one commissioner may reside in the same district, unless there are only two districts. If a public hospital district encompasses portions of more than one county, then the portion of the district located within each county constitutes a separate commissioner district. The board of a public hospital district is authorized to abolish commissioner districts by resolution.

There is no requirement for a candidate for public hospital district commissioner to be a registered voter in the district.

**Summary of Bill:** If a public hospital district is co-extensive with a county's boundaries, and the county is not a home rule charter county, then the county commissioner

districts are used for the public hospital commissioner districts. At the initial election of commissioners, and unless it is changed, one public hospital district commissioner shall be chosen from each of the three county commissioner districts.

If a public hospital district is less than county-wide, or encompasses portions of more than one county, or is located in a county that is a home rule charter county, then the petition to form the hospital district must describe three public hospital district commissioner districts. The districts must be approximately equal in population and boundaries, and follow ward and precinct lines as far as practicable. At the initial election of commissioners, and unless it is changed, one public hospital district commissioner shall be chosen from each of the three districts.

Any candidate for a public hospital district commissioner position must be a registered voter of that commissioner district.

The language that requires the portion of a proposed district located within each county to constitute a separate commissioner district is repealed. The language that allows two commissioners to reside in one district, if there are only two districts, is deleted.

The bill only affects hospital districts created after the effective date.

***Fiscal Note:*** Not requested.

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

***Testimony For:*** There are inconsistencies in the law pertaining to commissioner districts for hospital districts. This adopts the same procedures that are used for commissioner districts for public utility districts.

***Testimony Against:*** None.

***Witnesses:*** Greg Vigdor, Washington State Hospital Association; and Brad Berg, law firm of Foster, Pepper, Shefelman.