

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1635

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Local Government
Revenue*

Title: An act relating to local governmental medical care and services.

Brief Description: Providing for taxes to fund emergency medical care services.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Haugen, Day, D. Sommers, Nealey, Orr and Wynne.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Local Government, March 6, 1991, DPS;
Revenue, March 9, 1991, DPS(LG).

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1635 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill 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: Any county, city or town, emergency medical service district, public hospital district, or fire protection district is authorized to impose a property tax levy up to 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value of property for the provision of emergency medical services. The levy is a regular property tax levy that is imposed, if approved, for a six-year period.

At least 60 percent of the people voting on the levy must vote in favor of the levy, when the number of people voting on the proposition does not exceed 40 percent of the number of people who voted in the last preceding general election. A majority of the people voting on the levy must vote in favor of the levy, when the number of people voting on the

proposition exceeds 40 percent of the number of people who voted in the last preceding general election.

If a county levies the tax for emergency medical services, then no other taxing district within the county may levy the tax, except that if the county levies less than the full 25 cents, then another taxing district may levy a tax equal to the difference between the 25 cents and the rate levied by the county.

It has been suggested that the current 25 cents is not sufficient to meet the need for emergency medical services, and that it shouldn't be necessary to run an excess levy each year to raise the required funds. Various local governments have recommended that an additional 25 cents should be authorized for emergency medical services if the tax capacity is available for the taxing district.

Summary of Substitute Bill: An additional property tax levy of 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, or a total of 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, may be imposed by a county, city or town, emergency medical service district, public hospital district, or fire protection district for emergency medical services.

No taxing district may levy this additional 25 cents if there is pro rata reduction or elimination of levy rates for junior taxing districts within the boundaries of the taxing district. The additional 25 cent levy does not affect pro rationing.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Technical amendments are made to substitute the term "registered voter" for "elector" and to make internal references consistent.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The current 25 cent limit for emergency medical services is insufficient. There is strong community support for emergency medical services. It should not be necessary to raise the needed funds through special levies.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Bill Pupo, city of Spokane; Chief Dave Byrnes, Spokane Fire Department; and Stan Finkelstein, Association of Washington Cities.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
REVENUE**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill by Committee on Local Government be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 14 members: Representatives Wang, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Holland, Ranking Minority Member; Wynne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Belcher; Brumsickle; Day; Leonard; Morris; Morton; Phillips; Rust; and Silver.

Staff: Melissa Pailthorp (786-7118).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Revenue Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Local Government: No new changes were recommended.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Additional funds are desperately needed to adequately provide for emergency medical services. Raising the levy limit will help to resolve this need.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Otto Jensen, Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs; and Kathleen Collins, Association of Washington Cities.