

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJR 8230

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 5, 1992

Brief Description: Changing the number of electors necessary to approve school levy measures.

SPONSORS: Senator Bailey

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Murray, Pelz, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

Staff: Mich'l Prentice Needham (786-7439)

Hearing Dates: February 3, 1992; February 5, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Under the State Constitution a proposal to levy an additional tax or general obligation bond can be validated by a 60 percent yes vote when the total number of votes cast is equal to at least 40 percent of the votes cast in the preceding general election.

In recent years, school districts have had increasing difficulty passing special bond levies and the bond failure rate has dramatically increased. At the same time, the number of voters needed to validate bond levies increased with the significant voter turnout in the last November general election.

SUMMARY:

Article VII, Section 2 of the Constitution is amended to allow public school districts to pass an excess levy or general obligation bonds if three-fifths of the voters voting approve the measure. The 40 percent voter turnout requirement no longer applies to school district elections

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 3, 1992

TESTIMONY FOR:

Eliminating the 40 percent voter turnout requirement will help schools pass their levies and eliminate the power nonvoters have to fail levy and bond issues.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Eliminating the 40 percent voter turnout allows a minority of citizens to place a tax on everyone.

TESTIFIED: PRO: Karen Davis, WEA; Larry Swift, WSSDA; Debbie Sevier, Washington State PTA; CON: Paul Locke, citizen