

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1093

As Passed House
March 13, 1993

Title: An act relating to compensation for local officials.

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to compensation of local officials.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Zellinsky, R. Fisher, Bray, Springer, Rayburn, Dunshee, Edmondson, Foreman, Brough, Miller and Forner).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Local Government, February 9, 1993, DPS;
Passed House, March 13, 1993, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives H. Myers, Chair; Bray, Vice Chair; Edmondson, Ranking Minority Member; Reams, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dunshee; R. Fisher; Horn; Rayburn; Romero; Springer; Van Luven; and Zellinsky.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

Background: Levels or amounts of compensation for most local elected officials are established by state statute.

Since statehood, city and town governing bodies have been authorized to fix salaries for their members.

The original state constitution required the Legislature to classify counties by population and establish compensation for different county elected offices in the different classes of counties. A 1971 constitutional amendment permitted the Legislature to delegate the authority to county legislative authorities to establish compensation for county elected officials. Legislation was enacted in 1973 granting county legislative authorities the authority to establish salaries for their members but precluding a reduction of these salaries below the salaries that were in effect on January 1, 1973.

Legislation was enacted in 1992 establishing two different levels of monthly salaries, in addition to per day compensation, for the commissioners of port districts with gross operating revenues above a certain amount in the preceding year. This legislation also authorized the port commission of any port district to establish compensation for its members differing from the compensation and monthly salaries established in statute for port commissioners.

A statute establishes salaries for the initial councilmembers and mayor of a newly incorporated code city and permits the initial councilmembers to increase their salaries during their current terms of office, but the action of increasing salaries is stated not to be construed as fixing their own salaries. However, Article XI, Section 8 of the state constitution prohibits any local elected governing body that fixes salaries for its members from increasing the salaries during the current terms of office of these members.

Summary of Bill: Compensation that is established by a city or town governing body for its members, by a county legislative authority for its members, or a port commission for its members, must be stated in terms of a discrete dollar amount and may not provide for periodic increases referenced to anything.

Where an existing ordinance establishes compensation for the members of a county, city, or town governing body using a reference to various factors, and does not describe the compensation in terms of a discrete dollar amount, the compensation shall be limited to the level of compensation as calculated the day immediately preceding the effective date of this legislation.

Terminology is altered so that county, city, and town governing bodies are authorized to establish compensation for their members, rather than salaries for their members.

The authority is deleted for councilmembers of a newly incorporated code city to increase the salaries of its members during their current terms of office.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: Why is this being done? There was extensive legislative debate last year over ports setting their own compensation. This was part of a compromise.

Witnesses: (Con to original) Patrick Jones, Washington Public Ports Association.