

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6061

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to special elections.

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to special elections to validate excess levies or bond issues.

Sponsors: Senators Vognild, Winsley, Haugen and Sellar.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 23, 1994, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams, Ranking Minority Member; L. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Conway; Dyer; King and Pruitt.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: The state's Election Code permits local special elections to be conducted in conjunction with the state primary and state general election as well as specified dates in February, March, April and May. In addition, the Code permits a county special election to be called at any time to respond to a natural disaster or to the failure of a county special levy for the first time. Such additional "any time" special election dates are also afforded other local jurisdictions, but not during the period beginning with the opening of the candidate filing period and ending with the certification of the returns of the ensuing general election. These additional dates for the other local jurisdictions are for responding to a natural disaster or to the failure of a school or junior taxing district to pass a special levy or bond issue for the first time.

Summary of Amended Bill: Additional "any time" local special election dates are no longer provided by the Election Code for responding to the failure of a county special levy or to the failure of a school or junior taxing district levy or bond issue. The special election date for April is now the fourth Tuesday in April (rather than the first Tuesday after the first Monday).

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amendment changes the special election date for April and provides an effective date.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 18, 1994.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect January 1, 1995.

Testimony For: (1) "Wild card" special elections (special elections held at any time) are often requested before the county has certified the results of the previous election. That has a big impact on the workload of the elections office; sometimes, the office simply cannot provide such a poorly-timed special election. (2) The public is growing uneasy over constantly being in an election campaign for one levy or another. (3) Consolidating special elections on a particular date provides cost savings to all of the jurisdictions involved.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Sonia Soelter, King County Elections and Records Division (in favor); Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County Auditor (in favor); and Sam Reed, Thurston County Auditor (in favor).