

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1367

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, MARCH 25, 1993

Brief Description: Providing for mandatory election recounts.

SPONSORS: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Jones, Reams and Kessler)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Loveland, Oke, Owen, and Winsley.

Staff: Rod McAulay (786-7754)

Hearing Dates: March 24, 1993; march 25, 1993

BACKGROUND:

The state's election code permits a candidate for an office who failed to be nominated or elected at a primary or election to request that the votes for the office be recounted. An officer of a political party may also request such a recount. Such a recount is conducted on a fee-for-service basis unless the recount results in a change in the outcome of the primary or election.

The code requires that a recount be conducted, without charge to the parties involved, if the difference in the votes cast for the top two candidates for an office is not more than 0.5 percent of the total number of votes cast for these candidates. If this difference is less than 0.25 percent of the total votes cast for these candidates, the recount must be conducted manually.

SUMMARY:

The provisions of the election code which require that a mandatory recount of the votes cast for an office be conducted manually are amended. A mandatory recount is conducted manually if the difference in the vote totals for the top two candidates is less than 150 votes and also less than 0.25 percent of the votes cast for both candidates.

The top two candidates may agree, in writing, to an alternative method of conducting a mandatory recount if the alternative method is one approved by the Secretary of State and is compatible with the balloting systems involved.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Limits costly manual recounts to situations where the margins of difference is 150 votes or less. Also allows the candidates to agree to a nonmanual recount which may be far cheaper. Manual recounts rarely result in a change in outcome. They just pick up some ballots on both sides which the machine count rejected. This will help larger counties and will save money.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Jones, prime sponsor; Karen Flynn, Auditors; John Pearson, Office of Secretary of State