

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SSB 6063**

**AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 9, 1994**

**Brief Description:** Concerning local voters' pamphlets.

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Spanel, Winsley, Haugen and Franklin)

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6063 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Hearing Dates:** January 19, 1994; January 26, 1994

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT**

**BACKGROUND:**

The county auditor notifies each city or town that a voters' pamphlet will be produced. Cities and towns then have a choice to participate or not to participate in a local voters' pamphlet. If the choice is made to participate, then the legislative authority of the city or town appoints a committee to prepare the statement for and against the measure upon which a vote is to be taken. The cost of a local voters' pamphlet is born by the local jurisdictions included in it. The office of county auditor is elective and partisan. All elective officers in cities and towns are nonpartisan.

**SUMMARY:**

The county legislative authority must adopt an ordinance authorizing the county auditor to publish and distribute a local voters' pamphlet. The county auditor shall then notify cities and towns a voters' pamphlet will be produced. The city or town's participation in the voters' pamphlet is mandatory. The county auditor shall appoint the committee to prepare the statements for and against the measure upon which a vote is to be taken.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Counties deciding to publish a local voters' pamphlet must include all issues, thus giving electorate information sufficient for well-informed decision making.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

The local governmental unit which will bear the cost of its inclusion in the pamphlet should be the one to decide whether or not to participate in the publication. Some special districts' elections are of candidates largely running unopposed.

**TESTIFIED:** Sam Reed, Thurston County Auditor (pro); Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County Auditor (pro); Karen Flynn, Kitsap County Auditor (pro); Stan Finkelstein, AWC (con)

**HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):**

Not later than 90 days before a county publishes a local voters' pamphlet, the county auditor must notify each local government located entirely within the county that the pamphlet will be published. If the pamphlet is for a primary or general election, it must cover all of the offices and ballot measures of the local governments located within the county to be voted upon at the primary or election. However, entries for offices and ballot measures do not have to be included for: a first class or code city that publishes and distributes its own pamphlet; a town or city that is obligated by ordinance or charter to publish and distribute such a pamphlet and that does so; or a jurisdiction for which participation in the pamphlet would create an undue hardship and which has been relieved of this duty by the county legislative authority. In the latter case, the waiver must be provided not later than 60 days before the pamphlet is to be published.

If committees for preparing the arguments for and against the ballot measure for a unit of local government have not been appointed by that local government by the 45th day before the publication of the pamphlet, the county auditor must appoint the committees, whenever possible.