
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2168

State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1994 Regular Session

By House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Ogden, Carlson, Springer, H. Myers, Morris and L. Johnson)

Read first time 02/04/94.

1 AN ACT Relating to the election of county coroners; amending RCW
2 36.16.030; adding a new section to chapter 36.24 RCW; and declaring an
3 emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 36.16.030 and 1991 c 363 ss 46, 47 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 Except as provided elsewhere in this section, in every county there
8 shall be elected from among the qualified voters of the county a county
9 assessor, a county auditor, a county clerk, a county coroner, three
10 county commissioners, a county prosecuting attorney, a county sheriff
11 and a county treasurer, except that in each county with a population of
12 less than forty thousand no coroner shall be elected and the
13 prosecuting attorney shall be ex officio coroner. Whenever the
14 population of a county increases to forty thousand or more, the
15 prosecuting attorney shall continue as ex officio coroner until a
16 coroner is elected, at the next general election at which the office of
17 prosecuting attorney normally would be elected, and assumes office as
18 provided in RCW 29.04.170. In any county where the population has once
19 attained forty thousand people and a current coroner is in office and

1 a subsequent census indicates less than forty thousand people, the
2 county legislative authority may maintain the office of coroner by
3 resolution or ordinance. If the county legislative authority has not
4 passed a resolution or enacted an ordinance to maintain the office of
5 coroner, the elected coroner shall remain in office for the remainder
6 of the term for which he or she was elected, but no coroner shall be
7 elected at the next election at which that office would otherwise be
8 filled and the prosecuting attorney shall be the ex officio coroner.
9 Whenever the population of a noncharter county increases to two hundred
10 twenty-five thousand or more, the county legislative authority may, by
11 resolution or ordinance, combine the office of coroner with the office
12 of county commissioner. The county legislative authority must adopt
13 the resolution or ordinance that transfers the duties of the office of
14 coroner to the county legislative authority at least thirty days prior
15 to the first day of filing for the primary election for county offices.
16 The elected coroner shall remain in office for the remainder of the
17 term for which he or she was elected, but no coroner shall be elected
18 at the next election at which that office would otherwise be filled.
19 The county legislative authority shall appoint a medical examiner
20 before the expiration of the coroner's term of office. To be appointed
21 as a medical examiner pursuant to this section, a person must either
22 be: (1) Certified as a forensic pathologist by the American board of
23 pathology; or (2) a qualified physician eligible to take the American
24 board of pathology exam in forensic pathology within one year of being
25 appointed. A physician who is appointed to the position of medical
26 examiner and who is not certified as a forensic pathologist must pass
27 the pathology exam within three years of the appointment. A noncharter
28 county may have five county commissioners as provided in RCW 36.32.010
29 and 36.32.055 through 36.32.0558.

30 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 36.24 RCW
31 to read as follows:

32 Whenever the population of a noncharter county increases to two
33 hundred twenty-five thousand or more, the county legislative authority
34 may, by resolution or ordinance, combine the office of coroner with the
35 office of county commissioner. The county legislative authority must
36 adopt the resolution or ordinance that transfers the duties of the
37 office of coroner to the county legislative authority at least thirty
38 days prior to the first day of filing for the primary election for

1 county offices. The elected coroner shall remain in office for the
2 remainder of the term for which he or she was elected, but no coroner
3 shall be elected at the next election at which that office would
4 otherwise be filled. The county legislative authority shall appoint a
5 medical examiner before the expiration of the coroner's term of office.
6 To be appointed as a medical examiner pursuant to this section, a
7 person must either be: (1) Certified as a forensic pathologist by the
8 American board of pathology; or (2) a qualified physician eligible to
9 take the American board of pathology exam in forensic pathology within
10 one year of being appointed. A physician who is appointed to the
11 position of medical examiner and who is not certified as a forensic
12 pathologist must pass the pathology exam within three years of the
13 appointment.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate
15 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
16 state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take
17 effect immediately.

--- END ---