
HOUSE BILL 2168

State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1994 Regular Session

By Representatives Ogden, Carlson, Springer, H. Myers, Morris and L. Johnson

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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, determine that the county will appoint a
12 medical examiner to perform the duties of the coroner. If the county
13 legislative authority adopts such an ordinance or resolution, no
14 election shall be held for the position of coroner and the coroner's
15 position is abolished following the expiration of the coroner's term of
16 office. The county legislative authority shall appoint a medical
17 examiner to assume the statutory duties performed by the county
18 coroner, and the appointment shall become effective following the
19 expiration of the coroner's term of office. To be appointed as a
20 medical examiner pursuant to this section, a person must either be:
21 (1) Certified as a forensic pathologist by the American board of
22 pathology; or (2) a qualified physician eligible to take the American
23 board of pathology exam in forensic pathology within one year of being
24 appointed. A physician who is appointed to the position of medical
25 examiner and who is not certified as a forensic pathologist must pass
26 the pathology exam within three years of the appointment. A noncharter
27 county may have five county commissioners as provided in RCW 36.32.010
28 and 36.32.055 through 36.32.0558.

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

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32 hundred twenty-five thousand or more, the county legislative authority
33 may, by resolution or ordinance, determine that the county will appoint
34 a medical examiner to perform the duties of the coroner. If the county
35 legislative authority adopts such an ordinance or resolution, no
36 election shall be held for the position of coroner and the coroner's
37 position is abolished following the expiration of the coroner's term of
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4 medical examiner pursuant to this section, a person must either be:
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6 pathology; or (2) a qualified physician eligible to take the American
7 board of pathology exam in forensic pathology within one year of being
8 appointed. A physician who is appointed to the position of medical
9 examiner and who is not certified as a forensic pathologist must pass
10 the pathology exam within three years of the appointment.

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

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