

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1435

As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Administration

Title: An act relating to clarifying and harmonizing provisions affecting cities and towns.

Brief Description: Clarifying and harmonizing provisions affecting cities and towns.

Sponsors: Representatives D. Schmidt, Scott and Honeyford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Administration: 2/12/97, 2/21/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives D. Schmidt, Chairman; D. Sommers, Vice Chairman; Scott, Ranking Minority Member; Gardner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Doumit; Dunn; Dunshee; Murray; Reams; Smith; L. Thomas; Wensman and Wolfe.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

Background: Cities and towns are municipal corporations authorized to provide a range of facilities and services. Various different types of cities and towns exist that operate under different statutes.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A variety of changes are made to statutes relating to cities and towns.

Collection agencies. A collection agency that contacts with a city, town, or other government to collect debts owned to the government, collects fees, penalties, costs, and assessments associated with the debt, as well as its own reasonable collection costs, along with the underlying debt owed by the debtor.

Indebtedness limitations. A city, town, county, metropolitan park district, or library district that incurs indebtedness in the form of executive conditional sales contracts may not exceed its nonvoter approved indebtedness limit.

Insurance benefits. Medical insurance benefits paid to city or town elected officials are expressly declared not to constitute compensation.

Removal of employees. The authority of a town mayor to remove town employees is subject to applicable civil service laws or rules that may apply.

Civil infractions. A statutory reference is corrected concerning the civil infraction laws applicable to certain restrictions on carrying concealed pistols.

Number of members on a city council. A city that reclassifies as a code city may retain a council composed of the same number of members as it currently possesses, not withstanding the city's population.

Eligibility to hold office. A person is not eligible to hold an elective office in a second-class city or town unless he or she is a resident and registered voter of the city or town.

Second-class cities and towns. The population of an area, that determines whether it is a city or town when it incorporates, is clarified.

Newly incorporated city. The council of a newly incorporated city, that has adopted a council manager form of government, may determine the length of time a council member serves as the mayor during the interim transition period.

First-class cities. The minimum population for a city to become a first-class city is lowered from 20,000 to 10,000 to take cognizance of a constitutional amendment that was approved by voters in 1963.

Normal year in which city elections are held. It is clarified that a second-class city operating with a commission form of government normally holds its general elections in odd-numbered years.

Old references to third-class cities. References to third-class cities, which no longer may be formed, are deleted.

Metropolitan park districts. A code city law is repealed to take cognizance of legislation enacted several years ago allowing a metropolitan park district to incorporate in any city with a population of 5,000 or more.

Disincorporation. Limitations are removed so that a non-code city or town with any population may disincorporate.

Requirements for a second-class city to grant a franchise. Unique requirements for a second-class city to issue franchises are repealed.

Employees of a city with a commission form of government. A statute is repealed that requires the discharge of an employee or appointed officer of a city operating with a commission form of government who either (a) exerts influence in any manner on other employees or officers to favor any candidate for the city commission; or (b) contributes anything in any way to any person for election purposes.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Provisions were added relating to first-class city, second-class city and town populations, and the year second-class cities with a commission form of government hold general elections. References to third-class cities are deleted, and clarifications are made concerning metropolitan park districts in code cities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This is a technical bill making a variety of corrections and clarifications.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities.