

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5336

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: Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Horn and Haugen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Administration: 4/1/97, 4/4/97 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives D. Schmidt, Chairman; D. Sommers, Vice Chairman; Scott, Ranking Minority Member; Gardner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Doumit; Murray; Reams and Smith.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Dunn; Dunshee; 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 Amended Bill: A variety of changes are made to statutes relating to cities and towns.

Collection agencies. The reasonable costs of a collection agency that contacts with a city, town, or other government to collect debts owned to the government may be added to the amount of the underlying debt and collected from 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.

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.

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

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.

Limitation on annexations. For a two-year period, a city may not annex territory located in a county in which the city is not located if the territory was recently designated as an urban growth area by a county as the result of a decision by the growth management hearings board.

Municipal purpose annexations. Clarifies that a first-class city may use the special municipal purpose annexation procedure to annex territory. Only property owned by the city or town may be annexed under the municipal purpose annexation procedure. A city or town may annex territory located outside of an urban growth area using the municipal purpose annexation procedure.

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.

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.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: Provisions were added to delete references to third-class cities; populations of second-class cities, towns, and first-class cities; a newly incorporated city determining the length of time a council member serves as the mayor during the interim transition period; and clarifying the year when cities with a commission form of government hold elections. A provision was deleted relating to insurance for city-elected officials.

Provisions were added about a city annexing territory in another county that was recently designated as an urban growth area as a result of a decision by a growth management hearings board. Provisions were added about the special municipal annexation procedure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: These are technical, housekeeping provisions.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Elizabeth Morgan, Division of Child Support; and Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities.