

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 6698

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**As Passed House - Amended:**

March 5, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to the Washington state salary commission.

**Brief Description:** Revising timelines for the salary commission.

**Sponsors:** Senator McCaslin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Government Administration: 2/25/98, 2/27/98 [DPA].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House - Amended: 3/5/98, 94-0.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. 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:** John Carmichael (786-7093).

**Background:** The Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials establishes salaries for legislators, elected officials in the executive branch, supreme court justices, and judges of the court of appeals and superior courts. The commission files a new schedule of salaries in odd-numbered years. The salary schedule becomes law without action by the Legislature or Governor.

The commission must hold at least four public hearings before filing a new salary schedule. The commission's practice has been to hold hearings before proposing a new salary schedule. In 1997, this practice was challenged in Thurston County Superior Court. The commission was ordered to propose a salary schedule before conducting the four required public hearings.

**Summary of Bill:** Procedures are established for the Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials. The commission must first develop a proposed salary schedule and then hold at least four public hearings on the proposed schedule. The four required

hearings must be held as regular meetings as defined by the Open Public Meetings Act. At the last of these hearings, the commission must adopt the salary schedule as originally proposed or as amended at that meeting.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill will improve the public's ability to monitor and participate in the commission's activities. As originally drafted, the bill could be improved by requiring the commission to provide full public notice of its meetings. The commission should hold regular meetings, as defined by the Open Public Meetings Act.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Sherry Bockwinkel, Citizens for Leaders with Ethics and Accountability Now; and Shawn Newman, Reform Party.