

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5241

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, February 13, 1997

Title: An act relating to replacement of a county assessor or county auditor within counties that are not home rule charter counties.

Brief Description: Allowing replacement of county assessors and county auditors in more populous counties.

Sponsors: Senators West, McCaslin, Haugen, Swecker, Winsley, Morton, Hale, Bauer, Snyder, Goings and Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/30/97, 2/13/97 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Anderson, Haugen, Horn and Patterson.

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: Except as provided by home rule charter, all counties have an elected assessor and an elected auditor.

Summary of Bill: In a county with a population of 250,000 or more that is not a home rule charter county (Spokane and Clark), the county legislative authority may, upon majority vote at an election called by the county legislative authority, adopt a system under which an officer may be appointed to replace the office of assessor or the office of auditor. After adoption of a resolution or ordinance replacing the office of assessor or auditor, at least 30 days prior to the first day of filing for the primary election of county offices, the resolution or ordinance is referred to the voters at the next date for a special election that is more than 45 days from the date of adoption of the resolution or ordinance.

If approved by the voters, the assessor's or auditor's position is abolished following the expiration of the assessor's or auditor's term of office. The county legislative authority must approve an officer to assume the statutory duties performed by the county assessor or auditor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Let the people speak. If this can save money, we ought to allow the people to vote on it.

Testimony Against: The people don't want this change. Also, they should be allowed to vote the office back in if the office is eliminated. This takes away the independence of the offices.

Testified: Senator Jim West, prime sponsor (pro); Fred Saeger, Washington Association of County Officials (con).