
SENATE BILL 5241

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Senators West, McCaslin, Haugen, Swecker, Winsley, Morton, Hale, Bauer, Snyder, Goings and Fraser

Read first time 01/20/97. Referred to Committee on Government Operations.

1 AN ACT Relating to replacement of a county assessor or county
2 auditor within counties that are not home rule charter counties;
3 amending RCW 36.16.030; adding a new section to chapter 36.21 RCW; and
4 adding a new section to chapter 36.22 RCW.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 36.16.030 and 1996 c 108 s 1 are each amended to read
7 as follows:

8 Except as provided elsewhere in this section, in every county there
9 shall be elected from among the qualified voters of the county a county
10 assessor, a county auditor, a county clerk, a county coroner, three
11 county commissioners, a county prosecuting attorney, a county sheriff
12 and a county treasurer, except that in each county with a population of
13 less than forty thousand no coroner shall be elected and the
14 prosecuting attorney shall be ex officio coroner. Whenever the
15 population of a county increases to forty thousand or more, the
16 prosecuting attorney shall continue as ex officio coroner until a
17 coroner is elected, at the next general election at which the office of
18 prosecuting attorney normally would be elected, and assumes office as
19 provided in RCW 29.04.170. In any county where the population has once

1 attained forty thousand people and a current coroner is in office and
2 a subsequent census indicates less than forty thousand people, the
3 county legislative authority may maintain the office of coroner by
4 resolution or ordinance. If the county legislative authority has not
5 passed a resolution or enacted an ordinance to maintain the office of
6 coroner, the elected coroner shall remain in office for the remainder
7 of the term for which he or she was elected, but no coroner shall be
8 elected at the next election at which that office would otherwise be
9 filled and the prosecuting attorney shall be the ex officio coroner.
10 In a county with a population of two hundred fifty thousand or more,
11 the county legislative authority may replace the office of coroner with
12 a medical examiner system and appoint a medical examiner as specified
13 in RCW 36.24.190. In a county with a population of two hundred fifty
14 thousand or more that is not a home rule charter county, the county
15 legislative authority may replace the office of assessor as specified
16 in section 2 of this act or the office of auditor as specified in
17 section 3 of this act. A noncharter county may have five county
18 commissioners as provided in RCW 36.32.010 and 36.32.055 through
19 36.32.0558.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 36.21 RCW
21 to read as follows:

22 In a county with a population of two hundred fifty thousand or more
23 that is not a home rule charter county, the county legislative
24 authority may, upon majority vote at an election called by the county
25 legislative authority, adopt a system under which an officer may be
26 appointed to replace the office of the assessor. The county
27 legislative authority must adopt a resolution or ordinance that
28 replaces the office of assessor at least thirty days prior to the first
29 day of filing for the primary election for county offices. If a county
30 adopts such a resolution or ordinance, the resolution or ordinance
31 shall be referred to the voters for confirmation or rejection at the
32 next date for a special election that is more than forty-five days from
33 the date the resolution or ordinance was adopted. If the resolution or
34 ordinance is approved by majority vote, no election shall be held for
35 the position of assessor and the assessor's position is abolished
36 following the expiration of the assessor's term of office or upon
37 vacating of the office of the assessor for any reason. The county
38 legislative authority shall appoint an officer to assume the statutory

1 duties performed by the county assessor and the appointment shall
2 become effective following the expiration of the assessor's term of
3 office or upon the vacating of the office of the assessor.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 36.22 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 In a county with a population of two hundred fifty thousand or more
7 that is not a home rule charter county, the county legislative
8 authority may, upon majority vote at an election called by the county
9 legislative authority, adopt a system under which an officer may be
10 appointed to replace the office of the auditor. The county legislative
11 authority must adopt a resolution or ordinance that replaces the office
12 of auditor at least thirty days prior to the first day of filing for
13 the primary election for county offices. If a county adopts such a
14 resolution or ordinance, the resolution or ordinance shall be referred
15 to the voters for confirmation or rejection at the next date for a
16 special election that is more than forty-five days from the date the
17 resolution or ordinance was adopted. If the resolution or ordinance is
18 approved by majority vote, no election shall be held for the position
19 of auditor and the auditor's position is abolished following the
20 expiration of the auditor's term of office or upon vacating of the
21 office of the auditor for any reason. The county legislative authority
22 shall appoint an officer to assume the statutory duties performed by
23 the county auditor and the appointment shall become effective following
24 the expiration of the auditor's term of office or upon the vacating of
25 the office of the auditor.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If any provision of this act or its
27 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
28 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
29 persons or circumstances is not affected.

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