SENATE BILL 6608

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State of Washington   55th Legislature   1998 Regular Session

By Senators Heavey, Schow and Jacobsen

Read first time 01/22/98.   Referred to Committee on Government Operations.

1   AN ACT Relating to election of councilmembers in first class cities
2 with populations of over four hundred thousand; amending RCW 35.22.370;
3 and adding a new section to chapter 35.22 RCW.

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

5   **Sec. 1.** RCW 35.22.370 and 1965 c 7 s 35.22.370 are each amended to
6 read as follows:
7   (1) Notwithstanding that the charter of a city of the first class
8 may forbid the city council from redividing the city into wards except
9 at stated periods, if the city has failed to redivide the city into
10 wards during any such period, the city council by ordinance may do so
11 at any time thereafter: PROVIDED, That there shall not be more than
12 one redivision into wards during any one period specified in the
13 charter.
14   (2) Notwithstanding the city's charter, every first class city with
15 a population of more than four hundred thousand persons shall have a
16 city council with nine members. Six of the councilmembers shall be
17 elected from districts with each of the six elected from one of six
18 districts, and three councilmembers shall be elected at large.

1   The council shall by ordinance create a commission to divide the
 2 city into six districts and fix the boundaries of the districts. The
 3 council shall change the district boundaries from time to time and as
 4 provided in chapter 29.70 RCW. No change in the boundaries of any
 5 district may be made within one hundred twenty days next before the
 6 date of a general municipal election, nor within twenty months after
 7 the districts have been established or altered. However, if a boundary
 8 change results in one district being represented by more councilmembers
 9 than the number to which it is entitled, those having the shortest
10 unexpired terms shall be assigned by the council to districts where
11 there are vacancies, and the councilmembers so assigned shall be deemed
12 to be residents of the districts to which they are assigned for
13 purposes of determining whether those positions are vacant.
14   Districts shall be used as follows: (a) Only a resident of the
15 district may be a candidate for, or hold office as, a councilmember of
16 the district; and (b) only voters of the district may vote at a primary
17 to nominate candidates for councilmember of the district, and only
18 voters of the district may vote at the general election to elect a
19 councilmember of the district. The three at-large positions shall not
20 be associated with a district and the persons elected may reside
21 anywhere in the city. Voters throughout the city may vote at a primary
22 to nominate candidates for the at-large positions, when a primary is
23 necessary, and at a general election to elect persons to the at-large
24 positions.
25   Additional territory that is added to the city shall, by act of the
26 council, be annexed to contiguous districts without affecting the right
27 to redistrict at the expiration of twenty months after the last
28 previous division. The removal of a councilmember from the district
29 for which he or she was elected shall create a vacancy in such office.

30   NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 35.22 RCW
31 to read as follows:
32   Every first class city with a population of more than four hundred
33 thousand persons not divided into six districts on the effective date
34 of this act shall appoint a commission pursuant to RCW 35.22.370 to
35 create and fix the boundaries of the six districts.
36   The districts shall be created by March 1, 2003. The commission
37 shall cease to exist after the initial creation of the districts.

1   In the municipal general election held in 2003, if the terms of no
2 more than four councilmembers are about to expire, three councilmembers
3 shall be elected by district and one councilmember shall be elected at
4 large. If five or more councilmember's terms are about to expire, four
5 councilmembers shall be elected by district and two councilmembers
6 shall be elected at large.
7   If the terms of more than five or fewer than four councilmembers
8 are about to expire, the commission shall select by lot the minimum
9 number of additional positions for which the term will terminate in
10 2003 or positions that will be elected for two-year terms in 2003 so
11 that beginning in 2005 the councilmember's terms will be staggered so
12 that either four or five positions will be elected at each municipal
13 general election, with two at-large positions elected at each election
14 where five councilmember positions are elected.

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