

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2405

As Reported By House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to election dates for a first class city that changes its form of government.

Brief Description: Specifying election dates for a first class city that changes its form of government.

Sponsors: Representatives Gombosky, D. Sommers, Cox and Wood.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/2/00 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes a special election for a first class city to elect new municipal officers based on approval of a change in the form of the city's government.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Mulliken, Republican Co-Chair; Scott, Democratic Co-Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; Edwards; Ericksen and Fortunato.

Staff: Scott MacColl (786-7106).

Background:

All city, town, and district general elections in Washington are held throughout the state on the general election date in the odd-numbered years. There are specific situations in which this rule does not apply, including:

- elections for the recall of any elected officer; and
- public utility districts or district elections at which the ownership of property within those districts is a prerequisite to voting.

The county auditor, as ex officio supervisor of elections, upon request in the form of a resolution of the governing body of a city, town, or district, may call a special election if the county auditor deems an emergency to exist. The auditor must receive the resolution at least 45 days prior to the proposed election date in order to call the special election. Special election dates are specified in statute as the:

- first Tuesday after the first Monday in February;
- second Tuesday in March;
- third Tuesday in April;
- third Tuesday in May;
- day of the primary election; or
- first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

First class cities may operate with one of three different forms of government: council-manager, council-mayor, or commission-manager. A first class city may alter its form of government through a vote of the people.

Summary of Bill:

A city, town, or district general election may be held on an election date other than the general election date in an odd-numbered year if first class city changes its form of government through voter approval. Upon receipt of a resolution by the governing body of a first class city, the county auditor may call a special election for the purpose of electing new municipal officers as a result of an election approving a change of a first class city's form of government.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The city of Spokane recently voted to change their form of government, and the ballot said that the election of new council members would be in the next general election. However, current state law requires that city elections come in odd-year elections. This bill is needed to clarify that the city may hold the vote, as requested by the people, at this year's general election.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Rep. Jeff Gombosky, prime sponsor.