

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5150

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, January 24, 2000

Title: An act relating to county commissioner elections.

Brief Description: Authorizing county commissioners to be elected by the voters of each commissioner district.

Sponsors: Senators McCaslin and Patterson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 1/27/99, 1/28/99 [DP]; 1/17/00, 1/24/00 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Hale, Horn and McCaslin.

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: All noncharter counties have three county commissioners with the option to have five. They must be nominated by district and elected by the voters of the entire county. In three of the five charter counties (King, Pierce, Snohomish) county councilpersons are nominated and elected by district.

Summary of Bill: A procedure is established to allow the commissioners of noncharter counties to be elected by the voters of a county commissioner district.

In a noncharter county, a ballot proposition authorizing the election of each county commissioner by the voters of a separate county commissioner district must be submitted to the voters at the next special election date if: (1) the board of county commissioners adopts a resolution proposing the change; or (2) a petition proposing the change is filed with the county auditor signed by at least 10 percent of the number of voters residing in the county.

If a ballot proposition is approved by a simple majority vote, each county commissioner must be elected by the voters of his or her county commissioner district at the next general election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This will reduce the cost of elections.

Testimony Against: Commissioners represent the whole county. This will take away a reason for trying to become a home-rule county.

Testified: Paul Telford, Reform Party (pro); Bill Vogler, WA State Association of Counties (con); Jim Potts, Rural Counties (con).