

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 6690

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As Passed Senate, February 15, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to independent commissions to set salaries for city and town elected officials, and county commissioners and councilmembers.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying authority for counties, cities, and towns to create independent salary commissions.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on State & Local Government (originally sponsored by Senators McCaslin and Oke).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State & Local Government: 1/27/2000, 2/3/2000 [DPS].  
Passed Senate, 2/15/2000, 38-9.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6690 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Roger Brodniak (786-7445)

**Background:** The Washington Citizen's Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was created by initiative in 1986. The commission establishes salaries for state-elected officials. Members are appointed: (1) by both chambers of the Legislature with the approval of the Governor; and (2) at random from each of the nine congressional districts. There is no explicit statutory authorization in the RCW for independent salary commissions for city or county elected officials.

**Summary of Bill:** Independent salary commissions are created to establish salaries for city or town elected officials in charter cities or towns. Commission members are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council.

Charter and noncharter counties are given discretionary authority to establish independent salary commissions for county commissioners and council members. There are ten members on county salary commissions. Six members are selected at random by the county auditor from the list of registered voters in the district. The remaining four members are appointed by the county commissioners, or by a majority vote of the board of commissioners. These four members must represent the following sectors of the county: legal, professional personnel, organized labor, and business.

Members may not serve more than two terms on the commission, and may not be an immediate family member of a city or county employee.

Changes in salary adopted by the commission become effective and are incorporated into the city or county budget without further action of the city or county council. Salary increases become effective immediately, while salary decreases become effective when the current official's term of office has ended.

Any increase or decrease in salary is subject to a referendum petition by the people of the city or county, and may be submitted to the voters in the next general or municipal election.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill clarifies the authority for cities and counties to do what they likely already have the right to do.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Mark Brown; Ted Gathe, City of Vancouver.