

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1228

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
State Government

**Title:** An act relating to election costs.

**Brief Description:** Extending state payment of election costs.

**Sponsors:** Representative D. Schmidt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

State Government: 2/2/01, 2/19/01 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the state to pay a prorated share of state election costs during even-numbered years according to a graduated schedule that makes the state entirely responsible by 2008.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives McMorris, Republican Co-Chair; Romero, Democratic Co-Chair; Miloscia, Democratic Vice Chair; Haigh, Lambert, McDermott and D. Schmidt.

**Staff:** Catherine Blinn (786-7114).

**Background:**

The state is responsible for paying a prorated share of the cost of state primary and general elections held in odd-numbered years. County auditors apportion the state's share of election expenses, and file expense claims with the Secretary of State. Statewide issues addressed in odd-numbered years are limited to the election of state officers for the remainder of unexpired terms, and the approval or rejection of state measures. Similarly, every city, town and district is responsible for its proportionate share of the costs of a city, town or district election held with other elections. County auditors recover those proportionate costs from each city, town and district.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The state will assume a prorated share of the cost of state primary and general elections held in even-numbered years, but will do so according to the following graduated schedule: (a) 25 percent in 2002; (b) 50 percent in 2004; (c) 75 percent in 2006; and 100 percent in 2008.

The process for county auditors to file expense claims with the Secretary of State is already established.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 26, 2001.

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

**Testimony For:** The costs incurred by the counties for statewide elections should be a state concern. The state should assume responsibility for its share of election expenses. The bill phases in the state's financial responsibilities appropriately. County commissioners generally handle county funding and budgets, while county auditors generally handle elections and election costs. Although the Legislature replaced approximately 53 percent of the funding lost to local governments following the passage of Initiative 695, the passage of this bill could help replace the remaining 47 percent.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative D. Schmidt, prime sponsor; Bob Terwilliger, County Auditor's Association; and Doug Cochrane, Yakima County Auditor.