

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1669

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

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

**Brief Description:** Phasing-in state payment for even-year elections.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Haigh, Benson, Ahern, Armstrong, Wood, Shabro, Moeller, Blake, Condotta and Upthegrove.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

State Government: 2/20/03, 2/21/03 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the state to pay a prorated share of state election costs during even-numbered years according to a graduated schedule.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Shabro, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Nixon, Tom and Wallace.

**Staff:** Anne Warwick (786-7291) and Katie 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 (Secretary). 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 Substitute Bill:**

The substitute bill requires that 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:

- 25 percent in 2004
- 50 percent in 2006
- 75 percent in 2008
- 100 percent in 2010

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

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill clarifies that the state owes its prorated share of election costs during even year elections.

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**Appropriation:** None.**Fiscal Note:** Available.**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Starting in 1973 all jurisdictions were required to pay their prorated share of election costs for every election, except for the state. The real issue here is an issue of fairness. The state should be required to pay its prorated share of election costs for every election. Depending on the county, 50 percent to 80 percent of the even-year election costs are state accrued costs. This has a significant impact on the counties. This issue has been a concern of counties for many years. The state and counties need to have a fair partnership in elections, and the state should be required to pay its share in even-year elections.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; Kim Wyman and Greg Zempel, Washington Association of County Auditors; Mike Garvison, Skamania County Auditor; and Buell Hawkins, Chelan County Commissioner.