
State Government Committee

HB 2306

Brief Description: Changing the membership of the Washington citizens' commission on salaries.

Sponsors: Representatives McMahan and Boldt.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes the number of commission appointees from 16 to "two from each congressional district."• Eliminates professional appointees and requires all commission appointments to be random selections from each of the congressional districts.

Hearing Date: 1/13/04

Staff: Matt Kuehn (786-7291).

Background:

In the 1986 general election the 78th Amendment to the Washington State Constitution was approved by the voters, creating an independent commission to set the salaries of elected state officials. The amendment and the acts that followed set salaries through the use of an independent citizens' board, known as the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials (Commission).

Prior to the passage of the 78th Amendment a legislative advisory committee made recommendations to the legislature regarding elected officials' salaries. Recommendations regarding elected officials salaries were passed on to the legislature by the committee, and their suggestions were taken into consideration, but were not binding upon the legislature. That committee, known first as the Governor's Advisory Committee and then the State Committee on Salaries, was replaced by the current commission.

Under current law the Commission files salary schedules biennially with the Secretary of State. Unless there is a referendum within 90 days of the filing, the salary schedule recommended by the Commission is codified and the salaries made law. The Legislature plays no direct part in the setting of salaries.

The Commission is currently made up of two distinct membership groups. Of the 16 total members of the Commission, 9 are chosen from amongst the registered voters of each of the

congressional districts. Each of the nine current districts must be represented. The Secretary of State has the authority to determine how notification, refusal of a position and emergent vacancies are to be handled.

The remaining seven members are selected jointly by the Speaker of the State House of Representatives and the President of the Senate. All seven are required to have experience in personnel management. Of the seven, five must represent specific sectors: private institutions of higher education; business; professional personnel management; the legal profession; and organized labor. One of the remaining two is appointed consequent to the recommendation of the Washington Personnel Resources Board. The final Commission member is appointed by the recommendation of the presidents of the state's four year institutions of higher education.

In 1999 the terms of the appointees were adjusted so that terms are staggered.

Summary of Bill:

In 2006, all of the current appointees terms will conclude, and new members will be selected.

The new members of the Commission will be entirely drawn from congressional appointments, two from each district, each to be selected at random. Appointees will not be selected based on professional experience. There also will be no second term appointees barring random selection from the districts.

To maintain the current, staggered terms, the Governor must select by lot one commission member from each district who will serve only a two year term. The remaining commission member from each district will serve a full four years. After this, all members will serve four year terms.

State officials, public employees and lobbyists continue to be excluded from appointment. The disclosure laws continue to direct which amongst those groups is ineligible.

The total size of the Commission is changed from 16 to 18. Since all commission members are drawn from congressional districts, any change in the number of congressional seats in the State of Washington would cause the number of commissioners to rise and fall concurrently.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.