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**Local Government Committee**

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**SB 5747**

**Brief Description:** Requiring the supervisor of elections in charter counties to be an elected position.

**Sponsors:** Senators Schmidt, Finkbeiner, Poulsen, Esser, Stevens and Eide.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires that the person responsible for supervising elections in charter counties be an elected official.

**Hearing Date:** 3/27/03

**Staff:** Amy Wood (786-7127).

**Background:**

The State Constitution was amended in 1948, authorizing counties to organize and operate under a "home rule" charter. Adoption of a home rule charter does not change the role and authority of a county, but it does allow counties to provide for a form of government different from the commission form prescribed by state law for non-charter counties. Five counties have adopted home rule charters: Clallam, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Whatcom.

A county charter can make any elected county official, except the prosecuting attorney and superior court judges, an appointed rather than an elected position. By adopting a home rule charter, county voters can provide for appointed county officers to perform county functions previously performed by independently elected officials.

The five charter counties vary in their treatment of the offices of the assessor, auditor, superior court clerk, sheriff, and treasurer. The county auditor is an elected officer in all counties except King County, where the auditor is appointed.

**Summary of Bill:**

Charter counties must elect, rather than appoint, the person responsible for supervising all primary, general, and special elections.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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