

SENATE BILL REPORT

HJR 4204

As of February 17, 2004

Brief Description: Amending the Constitution to provide for a simple majority of voters voting to authorize a school levy.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Armstrong, Hunter, Hunt, Tom, McDermott, Wallace, Rockefeller, Fromhold, Eickmeyer, Miloscia, Talcott, Lantz, Schual-Berke, Ruderman, Pettigrew, Wood, Upthegrove, Hudgins, Morrell, Simpson, Darneille and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 4/2/03; 2/25/04.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: The Washington State Constitution gives school districts the power to levy additional taxes. There are two methods for authorizing excess property taxes for school districts. The first method requires a 40 percent voter turnout; the other does not. In the first method, a levy is approved if at least 60 percent of those voting in a school district election vote "yes" and the number of voters who turn out exceeds 40 percent of the voters who participated in the district's last general election. In the second method, a levy is approved if the number of "yes" votes is at least equal to 60 percent of the 40 percent of the number of voters who voted in the district's last general election.

School districts may submit a levy proposition to the voters at a special or regular election but not more than twice in 12 months.

To amend the Constitution, a bill must be passed by a two-thirds majority of both houses of the Legislature and approved by a majority of the people at the next general election..

Summary of Bill: An amendment to the Washington State Constitution is proposed to provide for a simple majority of voters to authorize excess levies for school districts. The amendment removes the 40 percent election validation requirement for levy elections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.