

SENATE BILL REPORT

HJR 4206

As of March 24, 2003

Brief Description: Amending the Constitution to provide for vacancies that occur after the general election.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Nixon, Flannigan, Pettigrew, Clibborn, Kenney, Haigh, Hinkle, Bailey, Morrell and Upthegrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 3/25/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Ronda Larson (786-7429)

Background: The Washington State Constitution specifies that vacancies in partisan offices at the county level or in the state Legislature must be filled by an appointment process. County commissioners must nominate three people to fill the vacancy, then vote for one. If a majority of commissioners cannot agree on one person within 60 days after the vacancy occurs, the Governor must appoint one of the nominees within 30 days thereafter.

The appointment process is required even for vacancies that occur after a general election in which voters have chosen a successor to take office at the beginning of the January term.

Summary of Bill: A constitutional amendment is proposed to eliminate the requirement for the appointment process in certain circumstances. If a vacancy occurs after the general election in a year that the office appears on the ballot and before the start of the next term, the successor's term may commence immediately after the election results are certified. Such successor need not go through an appointment process.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The resolution takes effect upon approval of the voters at the November 2003 election.