

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5153

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, February 18, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to establishing a procedure for the election of county commissioners by district.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a procedure for the election of county commissioners by district.

**Sponsors:** Senators Benton and Zarelli.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/5/03, 2/18/03 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

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**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Kastama and Reardon.

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Background:** County commissioners are nominated by commissioner districts. Each commissioner district contains an approximately equal portion of the population of the county. Counties are divided into three or five commissioner districts and have either three or five commissioners, respectively.

Each candidate for county commissioner must reside in the commissioner district from which he or she is nominated.

**Summary of Bill:** Either the board of county commissioners or the county voters by petition of at least 10 percent of the voters voting at the last county general election, with 20 percent of the signatures coming from each of the existing commissioner districts, may cause an election to be held to determine whether the board of county commissioners is to be elected by district.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** None.

**Testimony Against:** Some districts are gerrymandered which results in unbalanced representation. This option is fully available to charter counties. Counties that wish to elect by district should go through the freeholder process and become charter counties.

**Testified:** CON: Paul Parker, Washington State Association of Counties; Michael Kepcha, citizen.