
Local Government Committee

HB 1335

Brief Description: Providing home rule charter cities the ability to choose their election system.

Sponsors: Representatives Dunshee, Nixon, O'Brien, Jarrett, Simpson, Moeller, Fromhold, Ormsby, Chase, Appleton, Morrell, Clibborn, Kagi, Kessler, Green, Morris, Hasegawa, Dunn, Schual-Berke, Kenney, Wood, Dickerson and McDermott.

| Brief Summary of Bill |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modifies nonpartisan primary election provisions for cities, towns, and districts to specify that such elections must be held on dates established in statute except where the charter of a first class city provides otherwise.• Modifies the purpose statement to pertaining to the establishment of uniform primary procedural requirements to include an exemption for qualifying first class cities. |

Hearing Date: 1/31/05

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Cities and towns in Washington are classified according to population at the time of organization (usually incorporation) or reorganization. A first class city is a city with a population of at least 10,000 inhabitants at the time of incorporation or reorganization that has adopted a charter. First class cities have specific powers enumerated in statute, including the power to provide for general and special elections, for questions to be voted upon, and for the election of officers.

Subject to prescribed requirements, the state Constitution permits any city with a population of 10,000 or more to frame a charter for its own government. The charter, while containing provisions for governance and the exercise of city powers and duties, must be consistent with and subject to the Constitution and laws of the state.

City and town primary elections are nonpartisan and are held when more than two candidates file for the same position. Primaries for special purpose districts are also nonpartisan and are generally held when more than two candidates file for the same position. Nominating primaries for general elections to be held in November must be held on the third Tuesday of the preceding September, or on the seventh Tuesday immediately preceding such general election, whichever occurs first.

A purpose statement in current law specifies, in part, that provisions establishing requirements for certain nonpartisan primaries exist to establish the holding of a primary as a uniform procedural requirement to the holding of city, town, and district elections.

Summary of Bill:

City, town, and district primaries must be held in accordance with dates established in statute except where the charter of a first class city provides otherwise. The statutory purpose statement specifying, in part, that provisions establishing requirements for certain nonpartisan primaries exist to establish the holding of a primary as a uniform procedural requirement to the holding of city, town, and district elections, is amended to include an exemption for first class cities satisfying charter requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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