

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJR 4204

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

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

Sponsors: Representatives Schual-Berke, Chase, Wallace, Hudgins, Sells, Kenney, Appleton, Pedersen, Ormsby, Hasegawa, Lovick, Haigh, Dunshee, Hunt, Simpson, Lantz, Hunter, Williams, Linville, Goodman, Conway, Springer, Hurst, Campbell, P. Sullivan, Miloscia, Kelley, Moeller, Green, Rolfes, Eddy, Santos, Fromhold and Haler; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/6/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Submits to the voters a proposed amendment to the Constitution so that excess property tax levies for school districts are authorized by a simple majority of voters voting in a levy election.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, McDermott, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Roach.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The Washington State Constitution gives school districts the power to levy additional taxes beyond the 1 percent limit on property tax. Excess property taxes for school districts can be approved in two ways:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- (1) Forty percent voter turnout. If the number of voters who turn out for the election exceeds 40 percent of those who participated in the last general election in the district, then the levy is approved if at least 60 percent of the voters vote "yes."
- 2) Less than 40 percent voter turnout. In this case, a levy is approved if the number of "yes" votes is a number at least equal to 24 percent (60 percent of 40 percent) of the total number of votes cast in the last general election in the district.

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 voters at the next general election.

Summary of Bill:

An amendment to the Washington State Constitution is proposed so that excess property tax levies for school districts are authorized by a simple majority of voters voting in a levy election. The amendment removes the 40 percent election validation requirement for levy elections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: None.

Persons Testifying: None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.