
Local Government Committee

HB 2151

Brief Description: Authorizing qualified electors to divide optional municipal code cities into wards.

Sponsors: Representatives Ormsby, P. Sullivan, B. Sullivan and Dunshee.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorizes qualified electors of a noncharter code city to divide the city into wards or to change the boundaries of existing wards.
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Hearing Date: 2/20/07

Staff: Jessica Nowakowski (786-7291).

Background:

Cities may be classified as code cities or non-code cities and towns. Code cities have broad statutory home rule authority in matters of local concern. Code cities and non-code cities and towns have separate statutory requirements for governance and operation.

Subject to statutory requirements, the council of a code city that has not adopted a charter for its governance may divide the city into wards or modify the boundaries of existing wards. Except as otherwise provided, changes in the boundaries of wards may not affect the term of any councilmember, and councilmembers must serve out their terms in the wards of their residences at the time of their elections. The representation of each ward in the city council must be in proportion to the population, as nearly as is practicable.

Only a resident of the ward may be a candidate for or hold office as a councilmember of the ward. Additionally, only voters of the ward may vote at a primary to nominate candidates for a councilmember of the ward. Except as provided otherwise, the voters of the entire city may vote at the general election to elect a councilmember of a ward.

Wards redrawn by a council must be redrawn as provided in statutory redistricting provisions for counties, municipal corporations, and special purpose districts.

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.

Summary of Bill:

At any time greater than three months before a municipal general election, the qualified electors of a noncharter code city may divide the city into wards or change the boundaries of existing wards. Under current law, this authority is reserved solely for the city council.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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