

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2474

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, February 27, 2012

Title: An act relating to adjusting voting requirements for the renewal of emergency medical service levies.

Brief Description: Adjusting voting requirements for the renewal of emergency medical service levies.

Sponsors: Representatives Springer, Van De Wege and Fitzgibbon.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/12, 70-25.

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/20/12, 2/27/12 [DPA, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Murray, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Brown, Conway, Fraser, Harper, Hatfield, Kastama, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Pridemore and Regala.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Holmquist Newbry, Honeyford, Padden and Schoesler.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Parlette, Ranking Minority Member Capital; Baumgartner and Hewitt.

Staff: Dean Carlson (786-7305)

Background: An emergency medical service (EMS) levy is a regular voter-approved property tax levy which is used to provide emergency medical care or emergency medical services. An EMS levy may be authorized for six years, ten years, or permanently. An EMS levy must be approved by 60 percent of registered voters when the voter turnout exceeds 40 percent of voter turnout at the last general election. When the voter turnout is less than 40 percent of voter turnout at the last general election, the yes votes must exceed 24 percent of the total number of votes in the last general election. If approved, a taxing district may impose a regular property tax levy in an amount that cannot exceed \$0.50 per \$1,000.00 of assessed value of the property of the taxing district.

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 (Recommended Amendments): The uninterrupted continuation of a six-year or ten-year EMS levy must be authorized by 50 percent of registered voters at a general or special election.

In order for a six or ten year levy to be continued by a 50 percent vote, the levy must be continued at its same level subject to normal levy limits.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): In order for a six or ten year levy to be continued by a 50 percent vote, the levy must be continued at its same level subject to normal levy limits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This allows EMS levy renewals to pass with a 50 percent vote rather than a 60 percent votes. Over 80 percent of fire related calls are EMS calls. This is a fire service priority issue. It disheartening to see a levy fail when it gets a 57 percent positive vote and it hurts the bottom line.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Springer, prime sponsor; Dylan Doty, WA Fire Chiefs, WA Fire Commissioners; Bud Sizemore, WA State Council of Fire Fighters.