

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5126

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, February 25, 2011

Title: An act relating to compensation adjustments for government officials.

Brief Description: Concerning compensation adjustments for government officials.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer, Tom, Murray, Kastama, Rockefeller, Keiser, Conway, Regala, Hobbs, Shin and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 1/27/11, 2/25/11 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5126 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kilmer, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Parlette, Ranking Minority Member Capital; Baumgartner, Baxter, Brown, Conway, Fraser, Hewitt, Holmquist Newbry, Honeyford, Kastama, Keiser, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: The salaries of county and municipal elective officials are prescribed by either the respective legislative authority or a local salary commission authorized by a local ordinance or resolution.

If a local salary commission increases the salary of county or municipal elected officials, the increase may take effect at any time, without regard to the officials' terms of office. However, decreases in salaries of incumbent county and municipal elected officials, if adopted by a salary commission, do not take effect until completion of the official's term of office.

In second-class cities and cities operating under a council-manager plan of government, if the salaries of city council members are established by ordinance adopted by the council, neither salary increases nor salary decreases may be implemented until completion of the council member's term of office.

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.

Under the state Constitution, the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials prescribes the salary of state elected officials of the executive branch, members of the Legislature, and judges of the state Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Superior Courts, and District Courts. The commission meets every two years and files its schedule of salaries by June of each odd-numbered year.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): If a local salary commission decreases the salary of county or municipal elected officials, the decrease may take effect at any time, without regard to the officials' terms of office.

In second-class cities and cities operating under a council-manager plan of government, if the salaries of city council members are established by ordinance adopted by the council, salary decreases may be implemented at any time, without regard to the council member's term of office.

The Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials may meet as necessary to implement salary reductions under Article XXX of the state Constitution. The commission must file its schedule of salaries by October 1 of each odd-numbered year.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): The Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials may meet as necessary to implement salary reductions under Article XXX of the state Constitution. The commission must file its schedule of salaries by October 1 of each odd-numbered year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The enactment of the bill is contingent on the ratification of Senate Joint Resolution No. 8202 at the next general election.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: Elected officials should share the sacrifices that other public employees are experiencing during this period of economic hardship. The salaries of elected officials should be kept out of the political arena; the decision should be left to the discretion of the state and local salary commissions.

OTHER: Judges want to serve the people of the state in a fair and impartial manner, without undue pressure or threats of retribution. This proposal politicizes the salary setting process. The courts have already experienced significant budget reductions while experiencing greatly increased caseloads.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kilmer, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Judge Richard McDermott, Superior Court Judges Association.