
Local Government Committee

HB 2296

Brief Description: Addressing duplicate signatures on petitions in cities, towns, and code cities.

Sponsors: Representatives Pike, Harris, Blake, Vick, Taylor, Overstreet, Farrell, S. Hunt and Pollet.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides that, for purposes of determining the sufficiency of petitions submitted to a city or town, duplicate signatures on the petition, if otherwise valid, must be counted once, rather than stricken.
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Hearing Date: 1/22/14

Staff: Michaela Murdock (786-7289).

Background:

Petitions submitted in all cities or towns must comply with requirements set out in statute. There are numerous statutory purposes for which petitions are brought, including to:

- incorporate a city or town;
- advance the classification of a city or town;
- disincorporate a city or town;
- amend a city charter;
- initiate an ordinance;
- subject an ordinance to referendum;
- consolidate two or more contiguous cities;
- annex unincorporated territory to a city or town;
- initiate the formation of a utility local improvement district;
- create a metropolitan municipal corporation;
- change the name of a city or town; or
- create a city transportation authority.

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.

Petitions contain: (1) a concise statement of the action or relief sought by the petitioners, and applicable statutes or ordinances; (2) a true copy of the ordinance, if the petition initiates or refers an ordinance; (3) an accurate legal description of the area proposed for such action and a map of the area, if the petition seeks annexation, incorporation, withdrawal, or reduction of an area for any purpose; (4) numbered lines for signatures with space beside each signature for the name and address of the signer, and the date of signing; and (5) a warning to signers that is prescribed by statute.

To be sufficient, a petition must gather a certain number of valid signatures. Signatures must be of qualified registered voters or property owners, as the case may be, in the number required by applicable statute or ordinance (*e.g.*, "signed by registered voters in the city equal in number to 25 percent of the votes cast in the last general election").

When a petition has been filed, the county auditor or county assessor determines whether the petition contains a sufficient number of valid signatures. A signature must be stricken if: (1) any person has signed a petition two or more times; or (2) the signature is followed by a date of signing which is more than six months prior to the date of filing of the petition. For duplicate signatures, the original and all duplicates are currently required to be stricken.

Code Cities and Non-code Cities.

There are different types of cities: classified cities, code cities, or unclassified cities. Classified cities are first class cities, second class cities, and towns. Code cities are those cities that operate under the Optional Municipal Code. Unclassified cities are cities created by special acts of the Legislative Assembly of Washington Territory that still operate under territorial charters.

Summary of Bill:

Provisions governing code cities and all other types of cities, which require duplicate signatures, including the original, on petitions submitted in a city or town to be stricken, are modified. Duplicate signatures, if otherwise valid, must be counted once.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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