

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6004

As of January 20, 2014

Title: An act relating to election of public hospital district boards of commissioners.

Brief Description: Concerning the election of public hospital district boards of commissioners.

Sponsors: Senators Hasegawa, Roach, Keiser and Hobbs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 1/21/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: Public hospital districts are local government entities that may be created to provide health care facilities and services. Voters must approve a local ballot proposition to create a public hospital district. Since 1945 when they were authorized in state law, more than 50 public hospital districts have been created in Washington. Many provide facilities and services in rural areas. To finance operations, districts may levy property taxes, issue bonds, and charge user fees.

Public hospital districts are governed by three, five, or seven-member boards of commissioners. All voters in the entire public hospital district elect commissioners representing commissioner districts and at-large commissioners.

Cities may provide for election of each member of the city council by voters in districts, rather than by voters in the entire city, and approximately 20 have done so. Similarly, counties that adopt home rule charters may provide for election of each member of the county legislative body by voters in districts, rather than by voters in the entire county.

Summary of Bill: A public hospital district with a population over 290,000 must establish commissioner districts and provide for election of each board member solely by voters in the member's commissioner district, rather than by voters in the entire public hospital district. A board resolution implementing the new system may not reduce the term of a sitting commissioner, but later-elected commissioners must be elected under the new system.

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.

A public hospital district with a population over 290,000 as of the effective date of the act must comply with the act within eight months of the effective date of the act. A public hospital district with a population below 290,000 as of the effective date of the act must establish a commissioner district-based election system by June 1 of the year following release of an estimate indicating that the district's population has risen over 290,000.

Population figures are determined based on estimates annually compiled for each public hospital district by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and posted annually by October 1 on OFM's website.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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