

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1752

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to qualifications for chief examiners.

Brief Description: Addressing the qualifications for chief examiners.

Sponsors: Representatives Hawkins and Takko.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/3/15, 2/5/15 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/15, 92-5.

Passed House: 2/11/16, 92-4.

Passed Senate: 3/1/16, 48-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Modifies the requirement that chief examiners of civil service commissions for county sheriffs' offices be residents of the county to allow residents of adjacent counties to serve as well.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Takko, Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Griffey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fitzgibbon, McBride, McCaslin, Peterson and Pike.

Staff: Michaela Murdock (786-7289).

Background:

Civil Service Commissions – Office of the County Sheriff.

Civil service commissions for county sheriffs' offices (commissions) are created by statute to establish a merit system of employment for county deputy sheriffs and other employees of

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county sheriffs' offices. Statute provides that the purpose of the civil service system is to raise the standards and efficiency of such offices and law enforcement in general.

A commission is created by statute for each county or each combination of counties operating under a civil service system. Each commission is composed of three members appointed by the county legislative authority; however, the county, or combined counties, may increase the number from three to five members.

Commission members must be United States citizens, residents of the county for at least two years immediately preceding appointment to the commission, and registered voters of the county. Members are not paid, and they are prohibited from holding any salaried public office or engaging in county employment apart from their commission duties.

According to statute, commissions have numerous duties and powers. For example, they:

- adopt rules and regulations, including those regulating the manner of examination, appointment, promotion, suspension, and discharge of employees and deputies of the sheriff's office;
- administer practical tests to determine a person's capacity to perform duties of a position, including physical fitness and manual skills tests; and
- conduct hearings and investigations in accordance with statute and rules adopted by the commission.

Chief Examiners.

Commissions are charged with appointing a chief examiner, who must also serve as secretary of the commission. The commission has supervisory responsibility over the chief examiner. The chief examiner keeps the records for the commission, preserves all reports made to the commission, and keeps a record of all examinations. The commission may prescribe additional duties of the chief examiner.

The chief examiner must be appointed to the position as a result of a competitive examination open to all properly qualified citizens of the county. The appointee is prohibited from being an employee of the sheriff's office.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

The requirement that chief examiners of commissions be residents of the county they serve is modified to allow residents of an adjacent county to serve as well.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Chief examiners maintain records, and help establish evaluation and testing procedures for commissions. Under current statute, the chief examiner must live in the county. This strict residency requirement causes problems for counties. For example, in Chelan County, the chief examiner is part of a human resources staff level position. Applicants may live in a neighboring county only a few miles away, but are excluded from the position. The statute was passed in 1959 and, although the change made by the bill is minor, the update is needed.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hawkins, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.