

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1919

As Passed House:
March 11, 2015

Title: An act relating to the timing of special elections.

Brief Description: Clarifying the timing of special elections.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representative S. Hunt).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/12/15, 2/18/15 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/11/15, 89-9.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Changes the deadline for a county, city, town, or district to call for a special election from 45 to 60 days before the designated February or April election dates.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton and Gregory.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Hawkins.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

Every general election is held throughout the state on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November. A city, town or district, or combination such jurisdictions, may hold a

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special election on one of several specified dates. The governing body of a county, city, town, or district must call for a special election by presenting a resolution to the county auditor by a specified time before the chosen election date.

The designated special election dates and corresponding resolution deadline are as follows:

Special Election Date	Resolution Deadline
The second Tuesday in February	45 days before the election date
The fourth Tuesday in April	45 days before the election date
The day of the primary election	No later than the Friday immediately preceding the first day for regular candidate filing for the primary
The day of the general election	No later than the date of the primary

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The deadline for presenting a resolution to the county auditor calling for a special election is 60 days for an election on the second Tuesday in February or the fourth Tuesday in April. The certification deadline for the February and April elections is 10 days from the date of the election.

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) Jurisdictions can wait until the very last day to submit a resolution. The February resolution deadline falls just before Christmas, which makes it difficult for staffing purposes. Moving the resolution back to the second Friday in December will help with staffing the resolution request. This also gives more time to prepare the voter's pamphlet, including preparing statements for the pamphlet, as well as preparing the pamphlet to mail it to overseas voters.

(In support with concerns) There are concerns about a 60-day April deadline, which is only four days from the certification of the February election. This creates a very tight deadline for jurisdictions to decide whether to seek a second special election, if a levy or other measure fails at the February election. Shortening the certification deadline would help this problem by allowing more time between the certification of the February election and the resolution deadline for the April election.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Mary Hall, Washington Association of County Auditors.

(In support with concerns) Dan Steele, Washington Association of School Administrators.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.