

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2623

As Passed House:
February 12, 2016

Title: An act relating to recounts of statewide advisory measures.

Brief Description: Concerning recounts of statewide advisory measures.

Sponsors: Representatives Van Werven, Bergquist, Holy and Muri; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 1/19/16, 1/20/16 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/16, 94-1.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Exempts statewide advisory votes from election returns recount requirements.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Frame, Hawkins and Moscoso.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

Advisory votes were established in 2008 with the enactment of Initiative 960. Through an advisory vote, voters advise the Legislature whether to repeal or maintain a tax increase enacted by the Legislature. The results of advisory votes are non-binding and do not result in a change to the law.

An advisory vote must be added to the ballot as a statewide measure for the general election when the Legislature takes action to raise taxes and that action is either "blocked from a

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public vote" or is not referred to the people by referendum. "Blocked from a public vote" in this context includes the Legislature adding an emergency clause to a bill increasing taxes, bonding or contractually obligating taxes, or otherwise preventing a referendum on a bill increasing taxes. If the tax increase involves more than one revenue source, each tax being increased is subject to a separate advisory vote.

The Secretary of State must direct a recount of election results for statewide measures when the difference between approval and rejection of the measure is less than 2,000 votes and also equals less than 0.5 percent of the total number of votes cast on the measure.

Summary of Bill:

Statewide advisory votes are exempted from the recount requirements for statewide measures. The Secretary of State may not direct a recount for any statewide advisory vote.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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) Advisory votes are non-binding but voters take seriously the opportunity to register their opinions with elected officials. This is a cost-saving measure. This year an advisory vote came very close to requiring a recount which would have cost \$100,000 or more. It doesn't make sense for the state to incur these costs for recounts of non-binding votes.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Van Werven, prime sponsor; and Toni McKinley-Camp and Lori Augino, Office of the Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.