

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1281

As of March 21, 2017

Title: An act relating to modifying the appointment process for trustees of rural county library districts in counties with one million or more residents.

Brief Description: Modifying the appointment process for trustees of rural county library districts in counties with one million or more residents.

Sponsors: Representatives Fitzgibbon and Stokesbary.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/08/17, 82-15.

Committee Activity: Local Government: 3/21/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the number and manner of appointment of trustees for a rural county library district in a county with an adopted home rule charter and 1 million or more residents.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: Library Districts. A county, city, town, or library district may establish and maintain a library, either by itself or in cooperation with one or more other governmental units. Library districts are taxing districts and fall into four categories:

1. Rural county library districts provide library service to the entire area of a county outside of the area of incorporated cities and towns.
2. Island library districts provide library service for all areas outside of incorporated cities and towns on a single island only.
3. Rural partial-county library districts provide library service to a portion of the unincorporated area of a county.
4. Intercounty rural library districts provide library services to the entire area outside of incorporated cities or towns within two or more counties.

The management and control of a library is vested in a board of trustees, made up of either five or seven members. The number and manner of appointment of library trustees depends

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on whether the library was established by a city or town, county, or library district. A person may not be appointed to any board of trustees for more than two consecutive terms.

In rural county library districts, five trustees are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. The initial board appointments for rural county library districts are for terms of one, two, three, four, and five years respectively. Thereafter, trustees of rural county library districts are appointed to serve for a five-year term. Library trustees are required to:

- adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations for the governance of the library;
- have the supervision, care, and custody of library property;
- employ a librarian and other assistants, prescribe their duties, set their compensation, and remove them for cause;
- submit an annual budget to the legislative body;
- control the finances of the library;
- accept gifts of money or property for library purposes;
- lease or purchase land for library buildings;
- acquire property and lease, purchase, or erect buildings for library purposes;
- purchase books, periodicals, maps, and supplies for the library; and
- do other acts necessary for the management and control of the library.

Home Rule Charter. The state Constitution provides for two forms of county government: a "commission" form as established by statute; and a "home rule charter" form.

Under the commission, or noncharter, form of county government, a county's governing body consists of a board of commissioners who are elected on a partisan basis and perform executive functions. There are 32 noncharter counties. Counties that choose to adopt a home rule charter provide their own form of government that may be different from the commission form prescribed by statute. There are seven charter counties.

Summary of Bill: For a rural county library district within a county that adopted a home rule charter and has a population of one million residents, the size of the library's board of trustees is set at seven. Trustees must be appointed by the county executive and confirmed by the county legislative authority.

Members appointed to the board of trustees for these library districts must represent the geographic diversity of the library district and are required to be residents of the:

- cities and towns that, through annexation, have become part of the rural county library district; or
- unincorporated areas of the county.

The initial seven-member board of trustees includes the existing five trustees, who will serve out their existing terms, and two new trustees, one of whom will have an initial term of one year, and the other a term of two years. Thereafter, trustees are appointed to fill vacancies and will serve for a term of five years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill requires geographic diversity on the board of trustees of rural library districts. The seven members would represent the full spectrum of communities in the county. This is a good governance bill to make sure there is more diversity on the board representing the 1.3 million residents in the library system. The King County Library System supports this bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Joe Fitzgibbon, Prime Sponsor; Mac Nicholson, King County; John Sheller, King County Library System.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.