
SENATE BILL 5089

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Chapman and Short

Prefiled 12/19/24. Read first time 01/13/25. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to funding rural county coroners and medical
2 examiners; amending RCW 36.16.030; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that the most
5 rural counties in the state often face unique revenue challenges and,
6 as a result, are least able to immediately absorb additional costs
7 imposed by new legal requirements. In order to assist these counties
8 with additional independent coroner costs that will impact them
9 starting in 2025, the legislature intends to fully fund these costs
10 for a period of six fiscal years to allow these rural counties to
11 prepare for and fund at the county level these costs starting in
12 2031.

13 **Sec. 2.** RCW 36.16.030 and 2021 c 127 s 4 are each amended to
14 read as follows:

15 Except as provided elsewhere in this section, in every county
16 there shall be elected from among the qualified voters of the county
17 a county assessor, a county auditor, a county clerk, a county
18 coroner, three county commissioners, a county prosecuting attorney, a
19 county sheriff, and a county treasurer, except that in each county
20 with a population of less than forty thousand the county legislative

1 authority may determine that no coroner shall be elected and instead
2 appoint a coroner. In a county with a population of two hundred fifty
3 thousand or more, the county legislative authority may replace the
4 office of coroner with a medical examiner system and appoint a
5 medical examiner as specified in RCW 36.24.190. Any county may enter
6 into an interlocal agreement under chapter 39.34 RCW with an
7 adjoining county for the provision of coroner or medical examiner
8 services. A noncharter county may have five county commissioners as
9 provided in RCW 36.32.010 and 36.32.055 through 36.32.0558. For
10 fiscal years 2025 through 2030, the legislature shall appropriate and
11 disburse, to counties with a population of under 40,000, sufficient
12 funds to cover the costs of any new or increased responsibilities
13 under this section.

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