

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1748

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government Operations & Accountability

Title: An act relating to requiring the state to assume a share of the costs of state primary and general elections.

Brief Description: Requiring the state to assume a share of primary and general election costs.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Nixon, Shabro, McDermott, Haigh, Upthegrove, Moeller and Holmquist; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government Operations & Accountability: 2/18/05, 2/22/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Removes the requirement that the state pay only a prorated share of state election costs in odd-numbered years and instead requires prorated share payment for state election costs in all years.
- Removes the requirement that the Secretary of State pay interest on election costs if not reimbursed to the county within 30 days after receipt of a voucher for expenses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Miloscia, Schindler and Sump.

Staff: Hannah Lidman (786-7291) and Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The state is responsible for paying a prorated share of the cost of state primary and general elections held in odd-numbered years. Statewide issues addressed in odd-numbered years are limited to the election of state officers for the remainder of unexpired terms and the approval or rejection of state measures. County auditors apportion the state's share of election expenses

and file expense claims with the Secretary of State (Secretary). The Secretary must include budget requests for these funds in his or her biennial budget request. Reimbursements for these costs may only come from specifically provided appropriations.

Similarly, every city, town and district is responsible for its proportionate share of the costs of a city, town or district election held with other elections. County auditors recover those proportionate costs from each city, town and district.

The Secretary must pay interest on the state's prorated share of election costs if a county is not reimbursed within 30 days of receipt of a properly executed and documented voucher and the entry of an allotment from specifically appropriated funds. The Secretary must notify any county that submits an incomplete or inaccurate voucher for reimbursement.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

In addition to sharing these election costs in odd-numbered years, the state will assume a prorated share of the cost of state primary and general elections held in even-numbered years. The Secretary is not required to pay interest on vouchers for reimbursements that are unpaid after 30 days.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Includes a technical correction, ensuring an additional provision of state law is consistent with the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Original bill) This proposal ensures a sense of fair play in the financing of elections and takes financial pressure off strapped counties. It is an important part of reforming the election system in Washington.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Sam Reed, Secretary of State; Shane Hamlin, Office of the Secretary of State; and Pat McCarthy, County Auditor's Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.