
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

HB 1932

Brief Description: Shifting general elections for local governments to even-numbered years to increase voter participation.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregerson, Farivar, Peterson, Alvarado, Berry, Ramel, Stearns, Mena and Bateman.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits cities, towns, and certain special purpose districts to choose to hold their elections in even-numbered years instead of odd-numbered years.
- Requires cities, towns, and certain special purpose districts to hold their elections in even-numbered years instead of odd-numbered years if their voter turnout is below 40 percent in four consecutive odd-year general elections beginning with the 2025 general election.

Hearing Date: 1/9/24

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

Every November, the state holds a statewide general election. In years that end in an even number, the election includes general elections for federal, state, and county officers, as well as state or local ballot measures such as initiatives, referenda, and constitutional amendments.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In years that end in an odd number, general elections are held for city, town, and special purpose district officers, subject to a few exceptions. In addition, odd-year elections may include elections for:

- filling the remainder of unexpired terms for federal, state, and county officers; state legislators; supreme court justices; and superior court judges;
- county officers in a county governed by a charter that provides for odd-year elections; and
- state ballot measures.

State ballot measures must appear on the ballot at the next regular general election, and therefore they may appear in either even- or odd-numbered years. Special elections and recall elections also may occur in either even- or odd-numbered years.

Summary of Bill:

Cities, towns, and certain special purpose districts may choose to hold their elections in even-numbered years instead of odd-numbered years. To select this option, the legislative body of the jurisdiction may adopt an ordinance or policy, or voters may approve an ordinance or charter amendment referred by the legislative body. Prior to adoption, the legislative body must hold two public hearings at least 30 days apart to consider public input, and a final vote may not occur sooner than 30 days after the second hearing. If a jurisdiction chooses to switch its elections to even-numbered years, the term lengths of officers elected in the next odd-year election shall be one year shorter than provided by law. The choice to switch is not revocable and must be adopted before January 15 of an odd-numbered year to take effect in that election cycle.

Additionally, cities, towns, and certain special purpose districts must change to hold their elections in even-numbered years instead of odd-numbered years if their voter turnout is below 40 percent in four consecutive odd-year general elections beginning with the 2025 general election. Terms lengths of officers elected in the subsequent odd-year election shall be one year shorter than provided by law. The jurisdiction may not switch back to even-numbered years, even if turnout increases.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 2, 2024.

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