



Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Web: www.akrepublicans.org

Sponsor: Senator Gary Stevens
Current Version: HCS SB 14 (STA)
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Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 14

Short Title: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Summary:

- Removes the requirement that municipalities hold a special election for initiatives and referendums if no regular election occurs within 75 days after certification.
- Gives municipalities the option of:
 - holding the vote at the next regular election
 - holding the vote at an already scheduled special election occurring later than 60 days after certification of the petition
 - ordering a special election if it determines it is in the best interest of the municipality and no regular election occurs within 75 days
- Clarifies that an initiative or referendum special election cannot be held within 60 days of certification to allow ample time for procedural work.

Benefits:

- Saves municipal governments the expense of costly special elections on every certified initiative and referendum.
- Gives municipal governing bodies the flexibility to address urgent issues in a special election if it is deemed within the best interests of the municipality.
- Maximizes local control.

Background:

- If no regular election occurs within 75 days after the certification of an initiative or referendum petition, current law mandates that the governing body hold a special election between 45 and 75 days after certification. SB 14 was introduced at the request of the Kenai Peninsula Borough clerks, with support of the Alaska Municipal League, to allow municipalities to wait until the next regular election.

In one recent year, the Fairbanks North Star Borough had a total of 46 petitions filed over a period of four months. Though these petitions resulted in only one special election (at a cost of over \$60,000), the potential exists for many more at great cost to the municipality.

The provisions in this bill do not apply to Home Rule cities.