K I N G C O U N T Y CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

REPORT #2
OCTOBER 1, 1977

RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHANGES
IN KING COUNTY GOVERNMENT

King County

Charter Review Committee



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We offer to you our recommendations on the reorganization of government in King County.

The issue of governmental reorganization has been debated for decades. Numerous studies have been done with no apparent results. Recognizing this fact, we have developed our report beyond the conceptual stage to specific charter amendments which will implement our recommendations.

We believe our proposals will simplify and streamline Metro and King County government into a more effective and responsive system for all residents of King County.

We urge you to share this report with people in your community to begin the important process of public debate and decision during this next year.

KING COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

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I. INTRODUCTION

In November of 1976, King County Executive John Spellman appointed a twenty-member Charter Review Committee pursuant to Section 800 of the charter for the purpose of recommending to the County Executive and County Council those amendments, if any, which should be made to the charter to improve the operation of county government.

In addition to the general review of the charter, the County Council unanimously passed a motion supporting the merger of Metro and King County and requesting the Charter Review Committee to consider, as part of its work effort, the structure of the legislative body for a merged County/Metro government.

"BE IT FURTHER MOVED by the Council of King County:

Recognizing that the successful merger of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle with King County may require an expanded county legislative body to replace the Metro and King County councils thereby ensuring direct and equal representation of all citizens of the county, the Charter Review Committee is hereby requested to consider, as a part of its work effort, the structure of the legislative body for a merged County/Metro government and submit the necessary charter amendments to accomplish said structure to the Council in time to be included in the public vote on the merger. The Chairman of the County Council is requested to work with the Charter Review Committee, the County Executive, and the other entities of local government to develop a program by which the entire community will participate in the development of the merger." February, 1977

During the Committee's final deliberation process, it became apparent that the Committee needed additional time to reach consensus on recommendations concerning the reorganization of county government in the event of a merger of Metro and King County. Therefore, the Committee agreed to submit its recommendations to the County Executive and County Council in two separate reports:

- -- Report #1 to include charter amendments proposed for the 1977 ballot and general noncharter recommendations.
- -- Report #2 to include charter amendments and/or noncharter recommendations concerning reorganization of county government in the event of a

The following report presents the Committee's discussions and recommendations on the previous four objectives. The report is divided into several sections:

Section I Introduction

Section II Summary of Committee Recommendations

Section III Discussion and Recommendations on Changes in King County Government

Section IV What Happens Next?

Section V Minority Reports

III. DISCUSSION ON RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHANGES IN KING COUNTY GOVERNMENT

A. BACKGROUND

Is the Seattle-King County area ready for the reorganization of Metro and King County government? In 1969 John Fischer, writing in Harper's Magazine, stated that even though Seattle would benefit from a Metropolitan Council similar to the policymaking body in the Twin Cities, the area was not ready for it. Eight years have passed and the inadequacy of local government decision-making on countywide issues is more apparent than ever before.

The metropolitan agenda is crowded with separate issues -metropolitan water supply, long range transit plans and programs,
highway and bridge projects, RIBCO, agricultural land preservation, parks reprogramming, regional facility bond issues for
the Seattle Center and detention facilities, solid waste management plans, sewer interceptors and other utility plans. There
is no process for consideration of the impact of these plans
on the development of the county, no coordination of one project
with another and no method or forum for resolving conflicts and
inconsistencies.

King County, with a revised form of government under a Home Rule Charter for the past nine years, has been unable to gain the authority needed to assume the role of an urban county performing countywide functions. Metro lacks voter accountability and has been unable to expand its dormant functions into a multipurpose district.

Seattle's out-of-date charter, financial and boundary limitations have severely handicapped its ability to lead the area. The Port of Seattle, with boundaries coterminous with the county and Metro, is an autonomous district that is not a member of any local or regional intergovernmental group and seldom coordinates with other political entities.

The four-county intergovernmental Puget Sound Council of Governments was divided into four subregional councils a year ago. The Sub-Regional Councils are developing county-level land use plans based upon adopted regional growth and development policies. However, they have no real authority to implement their policies except through persuasion or, if federal funds are involved, through the A-95 review process.

The stalemate of inaction has become more apparent as expensive planning processes fail to be implemented, as inflation increases the public's interest in reducing the costs of

- 7. King County serves as a general purpose government for approximately 2,000 square miles of land and water. With the large size of the county and its centralized headquarters in downtown Seattle, citizens feel that county government is remote and inaccessible to county residents.
- 8. The present structure of county government for the unincorporated areas is perceived to be unresponsive. County Council districts are large and heterogeneous, each having a constituency of approximately 135,000.
- 9. Citizens are involved in the planning process but feel they have no control over the implementation of the plans.
- 10. Urban and rural areas of the county often do not require the same level of service. Applying regulations, policies and services uniformly throughout the county does not necessarily speak to the needs of the various communities.

After evaluating the above problem areas, the Committee adopted the following four assumptions:

- -- Subject to the reorganization of county government, King County, as a general purpose unit of government encompassing the entire county, should have responsibility for countywide policy development and planning.
- -- Subject to the reorganization of county government, the services currently provided by Metro should be provided by King County.
- -- Local districts, towns and cities should maintain and be granted as broad roles as practical in the provision of local services.
- -- Any reorganization of county government should be accomplished through changes in the present charter and state statute.

C. FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Before addressing the structural options for a second tier unit of government which would perform certain countywide services and a first tier unit of government for unincorporated areas which would perform certain local services, the Committee developed criteria to be used in determining what services should be undertaken on a countywide basis and what services should be carried out on a local basis.

FIGURE 1

SERVICES	COUNTYWIDE (SECOND TIER)	LOCAL (FIRST TIER)
1. Transportation		
a. Transit Plans	X	
b. Local Service Routes	·	X
c. Highways	X(with st	ate)
d. Ferry terminals	X(with st	ate)
e. Local Roads & Streets		X
f. Traffic Control	X	
g. Airports		X
2. Water Quality, Drainage & Supply		
a. Major Sewerage Interceptors& Water Quality Plans	х	
b. Local Sewer Collection Systems		X
c. Water Supply	X	
d. Water Delivery		X
3. Parks & Cultural Facilities		
a. Countywide Parks	X	
b. Neighborhood Parks		X
c. Countywide Cultural Facilities	X	
4. Solid Waste		
a. Disposal	X	
b. Collection		x
5. Public Safety		
a. Fire Protection		X
b. Jails & Detention Facilities	. X	A
c. Police, Emergency Operations		X
6. Health & Social Services	•	
a. Health Services	V	
b. Senior Citizen Services	X	v
		Х
7. Comprehensive Planning & Resource	Management	
a. Countywide Policy Development	X	
b. Local Zoning & Land Use Classifications		X
c. Agricultural Open Space	X	

- -- Smaller council districts would provide citizens with increased opportunities for participation and input.
- -- Would reduce perceived remoteness of county government.
- -- In the event of a merger of Metro and King County, would provide greater accountability to the voters for those countywide services provided currently by Metro and reduce number of governmental units responsible for countywide services.

Arguments Against:

- -- A council of 17 is too large a body to provide for an efficient decision-making process.
- -- Reducing council districts to approximately 70,000 will not substantially improve representation districts are still too large.
- -- Election by district can result in political logrolling.
- -- Electing 17 members by district does not enhance the possibility of electing representatives with broader, countywide perspectives (especially important in the event of a merger of Metro and King County).

The critical factor in the Committee's decision was the question of representation. During the public meetings, citizens expressed the feeling that county government is remote and inaccessible. This is especially true for unincorporated areas who have no other means of representation.

As local general purpose governments, the existing 28 cities in King County range in size from over 525,000 in population to 283 and comprise 64% of the total population of King County. The 36% of the population from unincorporated areas are served by a combination of special districts and King County government for roads, sheriff, planning, garbage, etc. As a result, the present nine county council members' responsibilities and roles are very different. Those whose districts lie completely within an incorporated city do not have any local legislative role, but those councilmen from unincorporated districts spend a large amount of time dealing with the "chuck hole" problems of the first tier.

4. DESIGNATION OF THE KING COUNTY SUB-REGIONAL COUNCIL AS THE OFFICIAL ADVISORY ORGANIZATION TO THE METROPOLITAN-KING COUNTY COUNCIL (in the event of the merger of Metro and King County).

The King County Sub-Regional Council will bring the perspective of its jurisdictions and constituencies pertinent to countywide issues. In addition, the Committee believes that it is important for the Port, school and other special districts to become involved in this proposed governmental forum.

E. OPTIONS FOR FIRST AND SECOND TIERS

The other options considered by the committee in making its recommendations can be summarized as follows:

1. Status Quo

Present system of county government with an elected executive and nine-member council responsible for some countywide and local services; Metro with a 37-member council responsible for the countywide services of water pollution, abatement and transportation; the King County Sub-Regional Council of PSCOG with a 28-member council with advisory responsibility for regional growth and development; city of Seattle with an elected mayor and nine-member council responsible for certain countywide facilities and water supply; other local jurisdictions; special districts.

Arguments For:

- -- Avoids label of "super government."
- -- To a certain degree, it is working.

Arguments Against:

- -- Fragmented approach to countywide policy development and planning and the provision of countywide services.
- -- Difficult for the public to know who is responsible for what, which results in a lack of accountability.
- -- Elected officials serve on too many governmental bodies.
- -- Inadequate representation (present Metro Council is not based on one man/one vote principle; King County Council districts are large and heterogeneous).

Arguments Against:

- -- Difficult to implement such a comprehensive change.
- -- Conflict between officials' local and areawide responsibilities.
- -- Would replace county executive with an appointed county manager.
- -- Would require writing a new charter under the provisions of Amendment 58 of the Washington State Constitution.
- -- Heightens the possibility for conflict between the first and second tiers and competition among the first tier units.
- -- Presents a number of practical problems: establishment and redistricting of lower tier boundaries, administrative overhead costs which will be incurred because of the increased need for intergovernmental cooperation and problem of assigning services to the appropriate level.
- -- Focuses citizen participation at first tier level. This may restrict direct citizen access to the second tier.

6. Metro Council Model Modified

A reorganization of county government into a two tier system with the second tier responsible for county-wide policy-making and performing countywide functions. The countywide council would be composed of 35-45 members, all elected officials appointed from local jurisdictions. The first options discussed above in #4 are applicable for this option.

Arguments For:

-- The advantages for this option are the same as the ones discussed above in Option 5.

Arguments Against:

- -- Difficult to implement such a comprehensive change.
- -- Lack of accountability to the voters.
- -- Conflict between officials' local and areawide responsibilities.
- -- Does not foster an areawide perspective -- local jurisdictions represent their local interest.

IV. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Committee has developed a timetable for implementation of the county council reorganization proposal outlined in this report. The Committee recommends that the question of consolidating Metro and King County and the proposed charter amendments reorganizing the county council be placed before the voters in 1978 in one of two ways:

Alternative 1: Place the Metro/King County consolidation on the ballot in September 1978 Primary Election and the charter amendments for reorganizing the council on the ballot in November 1978 General Election.

Alternative 2: Place both issues on the November 1978 General Election ballot.

Figure 2 illustrates the specific tasks which need to be accomplished prior to the 1978 primary and general elections. The tasks can be summarized as follows:

1. Redistricting the County Council Districts

The Committee recommends that the Boundary Redistricting Committee authorized by the charter, be called together to draw the new boundaries for the reorganized 17 council districts. The Committee further recommends that the Redistricting Committee's recommendations be completed no later than July 1, 1978.

2. Public Information Program and Formal Council Hearings

The Committee recommends that the Policy Development Commission (P.D.C.) be assigned the responsibility of organizing and conducting a citizen participation process on the question of consolidating Metro and King County and the proposed charter amendments reorganizing the County Council. The P.D.C., as an independent citizen's group, could play a strong role as educators on these issues. The Committee recognizes that the P.D.C. with its other responsibilities, may not be able to assume this leadership role. If not, the Committee recommends that the P.D.C. serve as a coordinating group to establish a process to assure citizen participation and consideration of these important issues.

The Committee did not have time to hold formal public hearings on the proposed charter amendment enlarging the size of the Council to 17. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the County Council hold formal public

hearings as part of the citizen participation process. Following the formal public hearing process, the Committee recommends that the Council make a decision by July 1, 1978, on placing the reorganized council before the voters. This will allow time for an initiative process in the event the Council decides against the proposal.

3. Areas for Additional Study

The Committee recommends the following additional study related to the merger of Metro and King County and the reorganized council before placing these issues on the ballot.

- A. Financial Impacts of Governmental Reorganization
 The Committee feels the fiscal policies of the
 metropolitan area are extremely important considerations in addressing the question of governmental reorganization. Specific issues that
 should be studied include bonding capacity, revenue
 sharing, concept of tax base sharing and potential
 operational cost savings and increases from a
 consolidated Metro/King County government.
- B. Legality of Dual Council Concept
 A question has been raised as to whether the Dual
 Council concept is legally possible as a transition
 step toward a reorganized Metro/King County Council.
 The Committee recommends that the legal questions
 should be answered.
- C. Countywide Significance Legislation
 The Committee recommends that the county should undertake a study to define countywide significant problems and programs and issues of local significance. A question to consider in the study is whether state legislation is necessary to establish countywide significance legislation.
- D. Boundary Review Board Process
 The Committee recommends revision in state law governing the Boundary Review Board process to insure that boundary review decisions are consistent with countywide development policies, plans and land use classifications.

4. Transition to New Government

The timetable on page 19 suggests that if the voters approve to reorganize Metro and King County, the new enlarged council will be elected in November 1979 and take effect in January 1980. The Committee considered the Dual Councils as a transition between the approval of the merger and enlarged council of 17 (1978) and the effective date of the new government (January 1980).

V. MINORITY REPORTS

1. Madeline Lemere

I voted to support the merger of Metro and King County only if there was a reorganized County Council. It doesn't seem to me that just enlarging the County Council means a reorganization. Therefore, I am opposed to such a merger based on the committee's recommendations for an enlarged council of 17 directly elected members. If a federated council including city elected officials had been agreed to, I would favor such a merger of Metro and King County.

2. Virginia Gunby

There are two issues in which I disagree with the Committee Recommendations.

- A. I do not agree with the recommendation to enlarge the size of the King County Council if they do not have any additional responsibilities for areawide problems.
- B. I do not support the election of the King County Council from districts only. I believe that the members of an areawide council need to serve a constituency larger than approximately 75,000 people. Therefore, I would urge that the Council be nominated by district in the primary and run in a north, south or central subregion of the county in the General Election.

S 230.30 Emergency Ordinances

A minimum of seven-affirmative-votes threefourths of the council voting affirmatively...

S 250 County Auditor

...shall be appointed by a majority of the entire county council.

\$ 340.40 Confirmation

.. by a majority of the entire county council ...

S 460 Appropriation Ordinances

...estimating the amount by motion passed by a minimum of six-affirmative-vetes two-thirds of the full council voting affirmatively...

· S 540 Personnel Board

First paragraph: A majority of the entire Council...

S 650.30.30 Districting Committee

...committee of at least five members subject to confirmation by a majority of the entire county council...

S 680 Vacancies

; absence from the county for a period of more than thirty days without permission of a majority of the full county council.

S 680.10 Election or Appointment to Fill Vacancy

Paragraph 2: A majority of the <u>full</u> county council...

S 710 Composition Appointment, Removal

Line 3: ... of the <u>full</u> county council

Line 6: A majority of the full county council

TWO TIER GLOSSARY

"Two-Tier System of Government" means a system in which all citizens of King County would live within an area with a local service government which is elected by and directly responsible to citizens who reside in the area and in which a second-tier government would have responsibility for County-wide policy-making and services.

"First Tier Government" means the local or primary units of government which are elected by and directly responsible to the citizens who reside in the area and which have responsibility for performing all local functions. First tier governments may be municipalities, urban or rural service areas.

"Second Tier Government" means the County-wide general purpose government which has responsibility for County-wide policy-making and performing County-wide functions. Second tier government may be composed of officials directly elected by the voters, officials elected to first tier positions, or a mix of officials selected in these two ways.

"Federated Legislative Body" means a legislative body responsible for County-wide policy-making which includes in its membership elected officials from other jurisdictions within King County as well as directly elected members.

"County/Metro Merger" means combining all the functions of the present two organizations into a second-tier government. The County could continue to perform local government functions after a merger.

"Sub-County Service Areas" means administrative mechanisms to be utilized by the county government for service delivery, policy application, regulation and taxation.

"Community Council" means an organization broadly representative of the community as a whole and concerned with enhancing the quality of life in the community by involving residents in public decision-making processes in many areas of community interest on a continuing basis. Community councils may be composed, all or in part, of elected members and may have purely advisory powers or certain decision-making powers shared with or delegated by local government.

APPENDIX 3

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCE MATERIAL

- 1. Metropolitan Study Commission Interim and Final Report, Feb. 19
- 2. Reorganization Study Seattle King County Region (Proposed by the City of Seattle, Office of Policy Planning 1976).
- 3. PSCOG Reports
 - a. King County Sub-Regional Report on the Metro Merger 10/76
 - b. Regional Policy Development Costs of Growth 3/76
 - c. Regional Policy Development Intergovernmental 2/76 Coordination
- 4. Guidance and Strategies for Local Government Modernization,
 Neighborhood Oriented Metropolitan Government Project,
 National Academy of Public Administration, March 1977.
- 5. <u>Multi-Tiered Metropolitan Government</u>: Four U.S. Reform Efforts, A Report by the Natural Academy of Public Administration, August 1977.
- Metro/County Merger, Metropolitan Government Reorganization,
 Two Tier Government: What's It All About
 Paper prepared by Office of Policy Planning, City of Seattle,
 June 1977
- 7. Tentative Analysis of the Metro/King County Merger As It Affects Seattle's Elected Officials
 Paper prepared by Office of Policy Planning, City of Seattle, June 1977
- 8. Statement on the Proposed Merger of Metro and King County: Dr. Richard Morrill, University of Washington, 1977
- 9. Alternative Representation Sytems For Areawide Government, A Report to the King County Charter Review Committee, May 1977, Prepared by Dr. Richard Morrill, University of Washington
- 10. Supercity/Hometown USA: Prospects for Two Tier Government, League of Women Voters Study, 1974
- 11. Summaries of Recent Governmental Reorganization Efforts
 - Twin Cities
 Nashville-Davidson County

(Intern Report, King County, 1977)

Mismi Dada County 19

3. Miami-Dade County

- 4. Indianapolis-Marion County
- 5. Jacksonville Duval County
- 6. Toronto
- 12. Portland Area Tri-County Reorganization Proposal October 1976 (Included Commission's Interim Report and Proposed Legislation)

APPENDIX 4

POPULATION STATISTICS

King County

Year			Seattle	
1890 1900 1940 1950 1960 1970	63,989 89,423 483,221 732,991 935,014 1,155,500		80,671 365,583 467,591 557,087 525,000	(44% of County Population)
	-Unincorporated 409,281 - -Other Incorporated areas	36% 212,216 -	20%	

1980 1,195,216

**<u>1990</u> - 1,377,801 populatior 536,903 households 581,616 employment

Projections*

2000 - natural increase - 1,216,320 limited growth - 1,582,200 continued growth - 1,722,653

INCORPORATED POPULATION 1970

26,000 21,000 20,000 16,805 15,275	Auburn Mercer Island	1631 1260 1164 1119 578 575	Pacific North Bend Snoqualmie Black Diamond Yorrow Point Hunts Point Duvall Carnation
4,900 4,900 4,435 4,240 3,455 3,150 3,018	Bothell Des Moines Enumclaw Issaquah Normandy Park Medina Tukwila Clyde Hill Lake Forest Park	• -	Beaux Arts Skykomish

^{*}The Growth Issue in the Green Cedar River Basins of King County November 1974 (RIBCO) pp. 17,18 **1976 Forecast - PSCOG-

APPENDIX 6

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

King County Local Units (1st Tier) 5/74	How Many Units	Governing Body How Elected Term	Functions	Taxation & Revenue Authority	Dissolution Procedures
Cities & Towns	28	Depends upon city size, charter, etc.	General purpose local govts.	Major taxing dists.	Dis incorporation procedures
Airport District	1	King County	Construct, operate	JTD	No provision
Fire Districts	37	Commission 3 members 6 year term	Prev. & extinguish fires, protect life & property	JTD GOB-EL	Majority vote of dist. or court action
K.C. Library District	1	King County	Operate library unincorp, contract incorp.	JTD	Petition of 10% of voters for election Majority of dist.
Metro	1	Not directly elected-apptd.	6 Metro functions (2 active - 4 dormant)	Sewer fees, MVET .3% tax, GOB, RB, etc.	No provision
Parks & Recreation Dist.	2	Commission 5 members 6 year term	Local parks & rec. facilities	OFML, EL	Court Action
Port District	1	Commission 5	Econ. Development, Terminals, etc.	OFML, LID, BA GOB, RB, EL	Court Action if not active
Public Hospital Dists.	4	Locally elected Boards	Acquire & oper. hospitals		No provision
Road District (unincorporated)	1 ,	King County	Unincorp. roads, maint, & construct	10 mills (1945) major taxing dst.	
School Districts	22	Locally elected Boards	Primary & Secondary Ed.	Major taxing Unit - EL	
Soil Conservation Dist.		Federal/state	Conserve soil for agricultural purp.		
Drainage District (flood)	10	King County	Provide flood control measures	ВА	By majority of voters of dist.
Sewer Districts	19	Commission 3 members 6 year term	Construct, operate sewer systems	OFML, EL, GOB, RB, LID	25% of voters in dist. petition proce of disincorp. of 3rd & 4th class cities
Water Districts	54	Commission 3 members 6 year term	Operate water delivery system (fire dept. oper)	OFML, EL, GOB, RB, LID	Court Action or majority of voters in district
TOTAL	183				

LEGEND FOR METHOD FINANCING:

JTD - Junior Taxing District

RB - Revenue Bonds

OFML - Outside Forty Mill Limit

LID - Local Improvement District

EL - Excess Levy - approved by voters

BA - Benefit Assessment

GOB - General Obligation Bonds

- 1972 -- King County voters authorized the levying of the .3% sales tax countywide and Metro Transit was established.
- 11/1972 -- Amendment 58 to the Washington State Constitution was approved by state voters to revise the County-City home rule amendment to allow a city/county not to be constitutionally restricted from including a graduated income tax in a proposed charter.
 - 1973 -- Washington State Legislature authorized MVET (Motor Vehicle Excise Tax) on a dollar for dollar match against a household or transit tax. Metro was authorized by the Legislature to issue General Obligation Bonds for public transit provided no bonds secured by the MVET could mature later than June 30, 1981.
 - 1973 -- Seattle 2000
- 3/1974 -- Seattle Freeholders elected to write a new Seattle Charter.
- 11/1974 -- RIBCO the Growth Issue Report
- Part I Water Resources Report
 Part II Environmental Management for the Metropolitan Area CedarGreen River Basins, Washington
 Part III Water Quality Report
 Part IV Solid Waste Report
- 10/9/1974 -- Ad Hoc Committee Report on Representation Alternatives in King County.
 - 1/1975 -- Washington State Attorney General's Opinion on Amendment 58 for Clark County.
 - 2/1975 -- Metropolitan Study Commission issued its final report.
 - 1975 -- Attempt by local elected officials to receive a National Academy of Public Administration grant for the study of reorganization of government failed, primarily because of lack of consensus in the community on the need for the study.
 - 11/1975 -- Proposed Seattle City Charter failed.
 - 2/1976 -- Metro/King County merger discussion paper circulated for review and comment by Ad Hoc Committee of elected officials in King County. Comments requested by March, 1976.
 - 4/1976 -- Letter from County Executive John Spellman to King County Sub-Regional Chairman Phyllis Lamphere requesting the Ad Hoc groups of elected officials study the King County/Metro merger.
 - 5/1976 -- Chairman Lamphere wrote a memo recommending the study and the King County Sub Regional Council agreed to study the issue on May 13, 1976.
- kO/28/1976 -- King County Sub-Regional Council issued the report. After discussion at the 11/4/76 meeting of the SRC the report was signed by SRC Chairman Lamphere and Mayor Stan Kersey, chairman of the Sub-Committee on Organization for Charter Review Committee.
 - 12/1976 -- 20 member King County Charter Review Committee was appointed by the King County Executive.
 - 1/1977 -- SB 2430 submitted to enable King County/Metro reorganization. Amended SSB 2430 passed the House and Senate on 6/7/77 and signed by Governor Ray, effective after 7/1/78.