
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5256

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCESS FOR INITIATING LOCAL LEGISLATION IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

SUMMARY

This bill eliminates a statutory requirement that a unit of local government (such as a town or taxing district) seeking a change to its special act powers (generally its charter) file a copy of the request with the secretary of the state before the legislative session begins.

With exceptions, the state constitution generally prohibits the legislature from adopting special acts regarding the powers, organization, terms of elective offices, or form of government of any single town, city, or borough (Conn. Const. Art. X, § 1). Relatedly, state statute requires that any special legislation concerning the powers, organization, or form of local government be requested by the affected unit of local government, generally through a resolution adopted by its legislative body or by citizen petition (see BACKGROUND).

Under current law, the local government unit's clerk must file the petition's text or a certified copy of the adopted resolution, as applicable, with the secretary of the state at least 10 days before the start of the legislative session in which it will be considered. The bill eliminates this filing requirement.

As under existing law, the legislature may opt to enact the requested legislation, but the statutory process does not automatically create a bill on which legislators can or must vote.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

BACKGROUND

Resolution or Petition Requesting Special Legislation

Under state statute, a request for special legislation may be brought

in three ways:

1. a two-thirds vote on a resolution endorsing the action, adopted by the (a) council or board of directors in a town; (b) board of aldermen, council, or body charged with making appropriations in a city or consolidated town and city; (c) board of burgesses in a borough or consolidated town and borough; or (d) board of directors or district committee in a district;
2. in a town without a council or board of directors, a resolution endorsing the action, adopted by (a) the board of selectmen or (b) a majority vote of the town meeting or representative town meeting; or
3. 10% of the local government unit's electors signing a petition supporting the action and filing it with the clerk.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Oversight Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/17/2026)