

HCS HB 1601 -- CITY OF ST. LOUIS POLICE FORCE

SPONSOR: Hoskins, 80 (Nasheed)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Urban Issues by a vote of 5 to 3 with 1 present.

Currently, the state oversees the police force for the City of St. Louis through the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners. This substitute allows the city to establish a municipal police force completely under the city's authority.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on General Revenue Fund in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013. Estimated income on Other State Funds of Unknown in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill places the oversight of the St. Louis Police Department back with the city which has not had control for over 140 years. Pension and residency requirements will not change. The bill will make improvements to the administration of the department, provide better accountability, and remove corruption.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Nasheed; Mayor Francis Slay, City of St. Louis; Former Mayor Vincent Schoemehl, City of St. Louis; Lewis Reed, Terry Kennedy, Antonio French, and Shane Cohn, City of St. Louis Board of Aldermen; Dr. Kenneth M. Stone, City of St. Louis; Jamala Rogers, Organization for Black Struggle; and Zaki Buruti, Universal African Peoples Organization.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the City of St. Louis Board of Aldermen have not provided a sufficient reason for changing the control of the police department. Other police departments under city control have poor reputations and corruption. Loss of state control will allow aldermen to influence police officers and result in a loss of benefits and labor equity.

Testifying against the bill were Joe Steiger, St. Louis Police Officers Association; Heather Taylor, St. Louis Ethical Society of Police; John Cullen, St. Louis Police Veterans Association; James M. Gieseke, St. Louis Police Leadership Organization; Kevin Ahlbrano, Missouri Fraternal Order of Police; Thomas J. Hickel; Anthony J. Russo; George Weindel; Carl S. Smith; and Manuel M. Delgado.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say pensions are a very important factor to consider when making a decision on the control of the police department because police officers are not

eligible for Social Security. There are also significant tax considerations that need to be understood when deciding who should have control.

Testifying on the bill were Neil Bruntroger; and Stephen M. Giegal, City of St. Louis Board of Aldermen.