

HCS#2 HB 178 -- LOCAL BALLOT PROPOSALS

SPONSOR: Koenig

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Ways and Means by a vote of 8 to 4.

This substitute specifies that a proposal by any political subdivision to enact a tax for any purpose that is submitted to and rejected by the voters may be resubmitted at any time in the immediately following two years but the proposal will not become effective unless it is approved by at least 60% of the qualified persons voting on the proposal. If the proposal is resubmitted after the two-year period, the proposal becomes effective if a majority of the qualified voters are in favor of the proposal. These provisions will not apply to any proposal to enact any tax for which the subdivision has a budget need because of a Governor-proclaimed disaster or emergency or the tax is authorized in the Constitution of Missouri.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill makes a disincentive for taxing jurisdictions to bring back up a tax proposal that was defeated within the last few years.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Koenig.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that they are unsure whether "any proposal" means identical, substantially the same, or even if major changes would be allowed. While the bill will not prevent a tax election, it will encourage high expenditure of public dollars on multiple elections. Cities learn from a loss at the ballot to educate the voters and slightly modify the proposal to gain support. Elections that are close make cities work with groups to make the tax proposal beneficial and acceptable to voters/citizens. They support the equality that a simple majority approval provides for all voters and oppose a super-majority approval requirement.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri Association of Counties; Missouri Municipal League; Missouri National Education Association; Matt LaVanchy, Association of Career Fire Protection Districts; Missouri School Boards Association; and Mike Lodewegen, School Administrators Coalition.