

HCS HB 202 -- University of Missouri Extension Districts

SPONSOR: Reiboldt

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Agriculture Policy by a vote of 14 to 0.

This substitute authorizes University of Missouri extension councils to form extension districts made up of cooperating counties for the purpose of funding extension programming. An extension district can be a single-council district or a consolidated district consisting of two or more extension councils. A majority vote of each participating council is required to form an extension district.

In a single-council district, the existing University of Missouri extension council will serve as the extension district's governing body. In a consolidated district, the governing board will consist of at least three but no more than five representatives appointed by each participating council. The powers and duties of a district's governing body are specified in the substitute.

The governing body of a district may submit a question to the voters of the district to institute a property tax levy in the district's counties. A property tax levy cannot exceed 30 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. The costs of submitting the question to the voters at the general municipal election must be paid by the district. In a single-county district, the property tax levy will be imposed if a majority of the voters in the county approve it. In a consolidated district, the property tax levy will be imposed if a majority of the voters in each county in the district approve it. If one of the counties in a consolidated district does not approve it, that county's council may withdraw from the district. Upon the withdrawal, the district will be made up of the remaining counties and the tax will be imposed. If the county does not withdraw, the tax cannot be imposed.

A single-council district for which a tax has not been levied may be dissolved in the same manner in which it was formed. A county may withdraw from a consolidated district at any time by filing a petition signed by at least 10% of the voters in the county who voted in the most recent presidential election with the circuit court having jurisdiction over the district. The court must hear evidence on the petition, and if it determines it is in the best interest of the county inhabitants, it must submit the question to the voters at the next general municipal election. If two-thirds of the voters vote in favor of withdrawing from the district, the court must issue an order withdrawing the county from the district. The costs of the election at the general municipal election is to

be paid by the district. The withdrawal will not become effective until the following January 1, and the district will remain intact for the purposes of paying all outstanding and lawful obligations and disposing of the district's property.

The governing body of any district may seek voter approval to increase its current tax rate, provided the increase will not cause the total tax to exceed 30 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. The governing body must submit the question to the voters at the next general municipal election. The costs of submitting the question to the voters at the election must be paid by the district. In a single-council district, if a majority of the voters in the county approve the question, the tax will be imposed. In a consolidated district, a majority of voters in the district is required.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will provide county extension councils with options to implement efficiencies and funding measures. Councils will be allowed to form districts in order to pool resources and staff to better serve their constituents. Districts will also be authorized to ask the voters in the district to authorize a tax to help fund programs. This will allow the citizens to determine if extension programs are important to them.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Reibolt; H.C. Russel, University of Missouri Extension Council; Tony Delong and Michale Quart, University of Missouri Extension; Wally Pfeffer, University of Missouri Alumni Association; Missouri Flagship Council; Missouri Farm Bureau; Missouri Agribusiness Association; and Missouri Federation of Animal Owners.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.