

HCS SCS SB 326 -- POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

SPONSOR: Sater (Fraker)

COMMITTEE ACTIONS: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on State and Local Governments by a vote of 8 to 1. Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Local Government by a vote of 9 to 1.

This bill changes laws regarding political subdivisions. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Extends the expiration date from July 1, 2016, to July 1, 2026, for the provision allowing counties to decrease their annual budgets;

(2) Requires the State Auditor to audit any political subdivision of the state if requested to do so by a petition only if it is submitted by a person who resides or owns real property within the boundaries or area of service of the political subdivision, the petition is submitted within one year from requesting the petition, and it is signed by the required percent of qualified voters of the subdivision. Any person who has signed or allegedly signed the petition may submit a sworn statement to the State Auditor that he or she did not sign the petition or that he or she wishes to rescind the signature. The statement must be made within 10 days from submission of the petition to the State Auditor. If the statement is timely filed, the signature must be withdrawn and must not count toward the required threshold;

(3) Changes the laws regarding fire protection districts. Currently, in St. Louis County, when a fire protection district services an area annexed by a city with a municipal fire department, the fire protection district continues to provide fire protection and emergency medical services to the area, the city pays to the fire protection district an amount equal to that which the fire protection district would have levied in the annexed area, and the annexed area is not subject to taxation by the fire protection district except for bonded indebtedness incurred prior to the annexation. The amendment provides that for property within a fire protection district that is annexed by a city after the effective date of the bill, the fire protection district will continue to provide services to the annexed area, and the annexed property will continue to be subject to taxation by the fire protection district and not to the city for fire protection and emergency medical services. The amendment also provides that for property within a fire protection district that was annexed by a city prior to the effective date of the bill, the fire protection district will continue to provide services to the annexed area, the

amount that the city must pay to the fire protection district will be incrementally decreased over five years and the amount the annexed area must pay to the fire protection district will be incrementally increased over five years, and the annexed area will not be subject to taxation by the city for fire protection and emergency medical services; and

(4) Establishes a dissolution procedure for special districts that is based upon the existing dissolution procedure for public water supply districts; establishes a detachment procedure for common sewer districts, reorganized common sewer districts, county sewer districts, sewer districts in counties of the second classification, and consolidated sewer districts in Jefferson County that are based upon the existing detachment procedure for public water supply districts.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that counties need this option.

Testifying for the bill was Senator Sater.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.