

HCS HB 1211 -- LOCAL COURTS

SPONSOR: Gatschenberger (Dieckhaus)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Local Government by a vote of 15 to 0.

This substitute changes the laws regarding local courts. In its main provisions, the substitute:

(1) Removes the requirement that judges of a county municipal court be residents of the county, and instead, allows the county to establish qualifications for the position by ordinance (Section 66.010, RSMo);

(2) Authorizes any local governmental agency to use collection agencies to collect specified debts, including court or administrative fines or costs associated with a criminal conviction or entry of a civil judgment (Section 67.136);

(3) Authorizes any county of the first classification to prosecute and punish violations of its county orders in the circuit court or in a county municipal court if the creation of a county municipal court is approved by an order of the county commission. The Franklin County Commission must appoint the first judges for the county municipal court for a term of four years, and thereafter the judges must be elected for a term of four years. The commission must establish by order the number of judges to be appointed and the qualifications for their appointment (Section 67.320); and

(4) Authorizes associate circuit judges in Greene County to hear and determine county traffic ordinance violations. Currently, associate circuit judges in only Cass County are authorized to do this. Also, associate circuit judges in both counties now are authorized to hear other county ordinance violations in addition to traffic violations (Section 67.2010).

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that a county municipal court will alleviate the work load of the circuit court and allow for a more expedient disposition of county violations.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Dieckhaus.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.