

HCS SCS SB 539 -- POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

SPONSOR: Brown (Franklin)

COMMITTEE ACTIONS: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Local Government by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on State and Local Governments by a vote of 8 to 1.

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

(1) Requires the Governor to fill a vacancy in the office of a county commissioner, clerk of the county commission, county collector of revenue, county assessor, county treasurer, county auditor, county coroner, county recorder, county public administrator, or circuit clerk no later than 60 days after its occurrence by appointing, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, an eligible person to discharge the duties of the office until the next general election. These provisions must not apply to any county that has adopted a charter for its own government;

(2) Allows the county commission, or a county officer designated by the county commission, to take or process applications for passports, or their renewal, if the court clerk in the circuit in which the county is located does not offer this service. Fees charged for the service must be retained by the county office that provides the service; and

(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 bill specifies 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 must continue to provide services to the annexed area, and the annexed property must continue to be subject to taxation by the fire protection district and not to the city for fire protection and emergency medical services. The bill specifies 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 must continue to provide services to the annexed area, the amount that the city must pay to the fire protection district must be

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

The provisions of the bill regarding filling vacancies in specified county offices contain an emergency clause.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that some county offices would like to be able to process passports as a community service, especially in rural areas.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Hinson on behalf of Senator Brown.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.