

HCS HB 1424 -- SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

SPONSOR: Roeber

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elections and Elected Officials by a vote of 6 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Administrative Oversight Committee by vote of 7 to 2 with 1 present.

The bill allows members of the General Assembly to run for the office of school board member as well as General Assembly member on the same ballot.

Currently, school board elections are held at specified election dates as determined by the designation and location of school districts. Beginning in 2020, this bill requires school board elections for seven-director school districts, urban school districts, and school districts with subdistricts to be held during the November general election. For all existing school boards not holding an initial election the terms will be staggered and four years in length, as specified in the bill. Any member whose term ends in 2019 or any other odd-number year will serve until the election in the following even-numbered year.

The effective date of the bill is January 1, 2019.

This bill is similar to HB 751 (2017).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will ensure uniformity in school board elections and help increase voter turnout. The ability of interest groups to capture a school board with only a few voters will be impeded.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Roeber; United for Missouri; Missouri Education Reform Council; and First Rule.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that it may increase costs for elections to other political subdivisions and municipalities and that school board elections will be overlooked during November elections. School board elections should be held in off years so that those voters who are most interested and invested can participate without the distraction of partisan, national elections.

Testifying against the bill were School Administrators Coalition; Missouri National Education Association; and the Missouri School Boards Association.