

HCS HB 447 -- CORONERS

SPONSOR: Houx

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 16 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 1.

This bill establishes the "Coroner Standards and Training Commission" and specifies the members of which the commission will be composed. The commission will establish training standards relating to the office of County Coroner. The standards will relate to the operation of the office, the legal responsibilities of the office, and the technical skills and knowledge required of the office. The commission may certify training programs that satisfy the classroom instruction requirements in lieu of the training provided by the Missouri Coroners' and Medical Examiners' Association. Certified training completion will be submitted to the association, and the association will submit the individual's name to the county treasurer and the Department of Health and Senior Services indicating the individual is compliant with the training requirements.

The commission must establish the training standards by July 1, 2020, and the association must begin providing the training by November 1, 2020.

The bill also establishes the "Missouri State Coroners' Training Fund" and creates a \$1 fee for all death certificates issued in the state, which will be deposited into the fund. It also specifies that any amount of money in the fund over \$500,000 shall revert to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

The bill specifies that, if a coroner is not current on his or her training, the department may prohibit that coroner from signing any death certificates. In the event a coroner is unable to sign a death certificate, the county sheriff will appoint a medical professional to attest death certificates until the coroner can resume signing them or until another coroner is appointed or elected.

This bill is similar to SCS HCS HB 2079 (2018).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this will help get coroners properly trained. There are people whose loved ones died and they still don't know why because of poorly-completed death certificates and autopsy reports. This training is very important and this would help bring the training to the 21st century.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Houx; William W. Harlow; Leslie Jay Minor; and Debby Ferguson.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.