

SS SCS HS HB 267 -- COUNTY GOVERNMENT

This bill makes several changes related to county government.
The bill:

- (1) Changes the months in which county commissioners are required to meet;
- (2) Authorizes the governing body of all counties to provide workers' compensation, health insurance, life insurance, and retirement plans for county employees;
- (3) Allows any county to acquire, own, erect, operate, manage, and maintain buildings and property outside the limits of the established seat of justice;
- (4) Authorizes any county of the first, second, or fourth classification without a charter form of government to adopt ordinances or resolutions related to its property, affairs, and local government. The bill limits the types of ordinances that may be passed. Ordinances may be submitted to the voters for approval. No county may pass an ordinance which will submit a tax to the voters without authorization by the General Assembly;
- (5) Establishes qualifications for a candidate for the office of county surveyor in counties of the second, third, and fourth classification. In counties of the third and fourth classification, a surveyor may be appointed if no qualified candidate seeks the office;
- (6) Authorizes any county subject to Environmental Protection Agency rules concerning storm water discharge to adopt ordinances that are necessary to comply with federal regulations. These counties may, upon voter approval, impose a storm water utility tax in an amount necessary to fund public storm water control projects;
- (7) Authorizes St. Louis County to impose, by ordinance, a semiannual fee of up to \$200 on owners of residential property or commercial housing property if that property, has been vacant for six months and is in violation of the housing code. A municipal officer must make the initial determination, and the owner may appeal or improve the property within 30 days. If improved, the owner may ask for reinspection. If the fee is still imposed, the owner may still appeal. Delinquent fees become a lien upon the property. Currently, only municipalities may impose the fee;
- (8) Authorizes all counties to impose, upon voter approval, a sales tax of up to 0.025% for community services for children up to the age 19. Current law allows St. Charles, St. Louis,

Jefferson, Franklin, Warren, and Lincoln counties to enact this sales tax. The moneys collected from the tax will be deposited into the county's community children's fund and administered by the board of directors;

(9) Increases the fee that a county collector may charge in charter counties and the City of St. Louis for a merchants license from \$5 up to \$25. The fee may be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index, but the fee may not exceed \$100. Current law sets the fee at \$5, except in Jackson County, where the governing body sets the fee, not to exceed \$100. The bill repeals a statute that was enacted twice, clarifying that the fee in all other counties is \$25;

(10) Establishes requirements for candidates for the office of public administrator. Candidates must be 21 years of age, be a resident of the county for at least one year, be a registered voter, and be current in the payment of all personal and business taxes;

(11) Requires county collectors in all counties, except charter counties, to establish an adequate system of bookkeeping, authorize and prescribe the method and manner of collection of taxes, and specify the format of the tax books and the form and manner of preparation of tax bills. All computer changes must interface with equipment and software in use; and

(12) Deletes certain current sections of law related to county government.