HB 380 -- Fire Protection Districts

Sponsor: Walton

This bill changes the laws regarding fire protection districts.
In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Requires the election authority in St. Louis, St. Charles,
Franklin, and Jefferson counties to establish fire protection
district wards equivalent to the number of fire protection
district board directors for the purpose of electing new
directors. The wards must be established after proper notice and
within 60 days of August 28, 2005, and within six months after
each decennial census. If the election authority fails to
establish wards within the deadline, the county commission must
establish the wards. The bill specifies the qualifications for
directors, election procedures, and procedures for the filling of
vacancies;

(2) Provides that in St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin, and
Jefferson counties, after one year of employment, full-time
salaried employees of the district will be subject to removal
only for cause and after a hearing;

(3) Prohibits public employers from requiring firefighters who
graduate from taxpayer-supported fire academies in this state to
attend and graduate from other firefighting academies as a
condition of employment. Continuing firefighting education may
be required; and

(4) Prohibits employees of fire protection districts, municipal
fire departments, or other public employers of firefighters from
contributing money or electioneering for or against fire
protection district or municipal tax ballot issues or fire
protection district board and municipal office candidates.
Employees are prohibited from electioneering while on duty or in
uniform and from using fire protection district equipment while
electioneering. Firefighter contributions cannot be expended on
ballot issues, except that firefighters may contribute to
committees for or against candidates or ballot issues pursuant to
Chapter 130, RSMo, regarding campaign finance disclosure.
Violations of this section are class four election offenses and
may result in forfeiture of employment.