

HB 1565 -- Fire Protection District Boards

Sponsor: Gray

This bill changes the laws regarding the board of directors of fire protection districts located in whole or in part in St. Louis County. The bill decreases the term of office of board members from six years to three years, specifies the details regarding the transition in term length for various boards, and allows voters to approve the increase of board members from three to five in the event of the consolidation of existing fire protection districts.

For fire protection districts located in St. Louis County that contain, in whole or in part, certain street light maintenance districts, the county board of election commissioners must establish wards equal to the number of fire protection district board members for the purpose of electing the directors. Each ward must contain approximately the same number of inhabitants and be of contiguous property as compact as may be. The ward boundaries must be drawn, after notice and hearing, within 60 days after August 28, 2010; after the establishment of a new fire protection district; or after the consolidation of districts and must be redrawn within six months after each decennial census. If the board of election commissioners cannot reach agreement on the ward boundaries by these deadlines, the county governing body must establish the boundaries within 60 days of the board's failure.

Employees of fire protection districts, municipal fire departments, and other public employers of firefighters are prohibited from engaging in electioneering or other political activity while on duty or while wearing a uniform or other official insignia identifying the employee as an employee of a fire protection district, municipal fire department, or other public employer of firefighters. Fire protection equipment cannot be used while engaging in electioneering or other political activity. Anyone violating these provisions will be guilty of a class four election offense and subject to forfeiture of employment.