

HCS HJR 37 -- COUNTY CONSOLIDATION

SPONSOR: Bosley

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 0.

Upon voter approval, this proposed Constitutional amendment specifies that any change to the territories or governments of St. Louis City and St. Louis County shall only occur as authorized by Article VI, Sections 30(a) to 30(c) of the state Constitution.

It also prohibits any alteration, merger, or dissolution of cities, towns, or villages without a vote occurring in each of the entities affected by a proposal for alteration, merger, or dissolution.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that respect for democracy and popular sovereignty require that the voters have the final say on matters concerning the fundamental nature of their state and local government. Any process involving merger or dissolution should be open and transparent.

Currently, both the citizens of St. Louis City and the residents of St. Louis County are required to vote on any proposed mergers and set out a method to accomplish such a merger. Statewide voters lack any interest whatsoever in voting upon which form of local government to impose upon other residents in St. Louis. Although St. Louis area residents have different views on whether or not to merge the city and county, there is extremely widespread agreement that the process should be decided by a vote of both the city and county and not by a statewide vote.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Bosley; Mavis Thompson; Rochelle Gray; Darlene Bell, Moline Acres; Missouri Police Chiefs Association; Mary Neal; Michele Deshay, City of Moline Acres; Wayne Lee; Terry Briggs; Paulette Carr, University City; Joan Bray; and James W. McGee, City of Vinita Park.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.