

## HJR 54 -- NEW POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

SPONSOR: Plocher

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 9 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 0.

Upon voter approval, this proposed Constitutional amendment would require a majority vote in order to create a new political subdivision within a county or city not within a county where the vote must be held in both the proposed new political subdivision territory and the existing county or city not within a county in order to authorize the new political subdivision. The amendment also prohibits ballot measures to dissolve any city or county or merge any city or county with another city or county unless there is a majority vote in each affected city or county authorizing the dissolution or merger.

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. This principle should be applied broadly to all changes in political subdivision status throughout Missouri so that local voters will have a voice in deciding important questions such as dissolution or merger. 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 government to impose upon other residents in St. Louis.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Plocher; Sean Flower; William E. Kuhlmann; Louis Holtmann; Christine E Hessel; Missouri Municipal League; Kurt Witzel, Oakville Township Republican Organization; Eureka; Missouri Family Network; Ronald L. Cawood; Ron Canby; Jennifer McKnight; Steven McKnight; Municipal League of Metro St Louis; Michael E Roemerman; Douglas M Parham; Karen Neilson; Casilda (Chris) J. Struckhoff; 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.