

HCS HB 553 -- RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

SPONSOR: Hicks

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Public Safety by a vote of 7 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 553.

This bill repeals the requirement that the Attorney General reside at the seat of government.

The bill also specifies that no employee of a political subdivision of this state, subject to exceptions, can be required to reside within a particular jurisdiction as a condition of employment.

This bill repeals residency provisions related specifically to the City of St. Louis.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this deals with the residency requirement within the state. In special session they passed a bill lifting the residency requirement for the city of St. Louis. This bill would lift the residency requirements in the rest of the state, primarily Kansas City. Historically, these residency requirements were needed, especially when populations were a lot lower. The pool to choose from has shrunk drastically so having big restrictions hurts the ability to hire good candidates. There have been studies done and people reaching out who want this to apply to their area. You don't think, when you are young and accept a job, that you have to think twice about taking a job because you might be required to stay in the area rather than moving for your family. This is an antiquated policy, and these officers need a mental and emotional break from constantly being in the community they police. Kansas City is down a lot of officers and their pool of recruitment is down, which means the current officers have to work a lot extra, which is also stressful. The government should not say that a couple has to choose which community to live in. You should not have to choose which spouse would be able to be more integrated in the community.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hicks; and the Kansas

City Fraternal Order of Police.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that all across the state, families sit down and make tough decisions about where they want to live, where they want to raise their kids, how they want to raise their kids, where they want to work, etc. So this is not new. People who want to be police officers in Kansas City know they have to follow rules required of them. There is a robust recruiting process in Kansas City. The police commission in Kansas City can take a vote tomorrow to remove the residency requirements; we don't need state involvement to change those. People in Kansas City want to be policed by people who live in their community.

Testifying against the bill were Arnie C. Dienoff; Missouri Municipal League; City of Kansas City and Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.