

HCS SB 845 -- FINANCIAL INFORMATION PROVIDED TO COUNTY OFFICIALS

SPONSOR: Eslinger (Falkner)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Local Government by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for SB 845.

This bill requires all non-charter counties, by the first Monday in March, to prepare and publish in a qualified newspaper a financial statement for the previous year.

The financial statement shall include the name, office, and current gross annual salary of each elected or appointed county official whose salary is set by the County Salary Commission.

The County Clerk or other officer responsible for the preparation of the financial statement shall preserve the documents relied upon in the making of the financial statements and shall provide an electronic copy free of charge to any newspaper requesting a copy of the data.

Currently, these requirements only apply to counties of the first classification (Sections 50.815 and 50.820, RSMo).

The sections previously dealing with county financial statements and their publication for counties of the second, third, and fourth classifications are repealed (Section 50.800 and 50.810).

This bill requires any person filing as a candidate for election that performs county functions in St. Louis City to provide appropriate copies of tax receipts or no-tax-due statements that indicate the candidate has paid all taxes due. The Election Authority shall review these documents and affirmation of required tax payments. Additionally, the Tax Authority shall verify there are no ethics complaints filed pursuant to Section 105.472 with the Missouri Ethics Commission. The Election Authority shall not allow the candidate's name to be placed on the ballot until any ethics complaint has been resolved (Section 115.306).

This bill provides that if a public administrator is appointed by a court as both a guardian and a conservator to the same ward or protectee, it will be considered two letters.

Upon majority approval of the County Salary Commission, a public

administrator may be paid according to the assessed valuation schedule set forth in the bill. If the Salary Commission elects to pay a public administrator according to the salary schedule it cannot thereafter change to paying the public administrator according to the average number of open letters. Beginning January 1, 2023, public administrators whose terms start on or after that date shall be deemed to have elected to receive a salary as provided in the bill (Section 473.742).

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

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that transparency is good for all county classifications.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Eslinger; Arnie C. Dienoff; Missouri Association of County Auditors; Missouri Association of County Clerks and Election Authorities; and Doug Crews, Missouri Press Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

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.