

HB 353 -- NEWSPAPERS

SPONSOR: McGaugh

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Local Government by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 8 to 0.

Currently, in order to qualify to run public notices and advertisements, a newspaper must have been published regularly for a period of three years; or must be the successor newspaper to a defunct newspaper and begin publication no later than 30 days after the termination of the prior newspaper.

This bill reduces the time period of regular publication from three years to one year, and increases the time period from 30 days to 90 days within which a successor newspaper must begin publication.

The bill also allows a newspaper that has been purchased or newly established by another newspaper that satisfies these conditions to qualify.

This bill is the same as HB 2301 (2024) and 782 (2023).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that Missouri has one of the longest periods required before a newly-established paper can run public notices and advertisements. Notices help spread needed information to the public and can help keep struggling papers open. One year is still too long for a bad actor to exploit this process.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative McGaugh; Municipal League of Metro St. Louis; Richard Douglas Crews, Missouri Press Association; and Arnie Dienoff.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

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