

HB 374 -- MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

SPONSOR: McGaugh

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Government Efficiency by a vote of 14 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 8 to 0.

Currently, governing bodies of political subdivisions with general operating budgets in excess of \$1 million are required to file financial interest statements with the Missouri Ethics Commission.

This bill requires the governing body of each political subdivision, before July 16 of each calendar year, to submit an attestation to the Commission of whether the body's annual operating budget exceeds \$1 million.

The bill requires certain entities, before December 16 of each calendar year, to send the Commission a list of the names of all individuals required to file a financial interest statement.

Currently, each official, officer, employee, or candidate of certain political subdivisions are required to file a financial interest statement unless the political subdivision adopts an ordinance, order, or resolution biennially in which it establishes its own method for disclosing potential conflicts of interest for such officials.

This bill removes the requirement that this be done biennially, allowing the above mentioned ordinance, order, or resolution to remain in effect until amended or rescinded by the governing body of the political subdivision.

The bill requires political subdivisions and the Secretary of State, within two business days after the close of candidate filing, to provide the Commission a list of all candidates required to file a financial interest statement.

This bill adds these provisions to the information that the Commission is allowed to request and receive.

This bill is the same as HCS HB 2146 (2024).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that biennial approval is odd and that making the change to an annual basis would be helpful for political subdivisions.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative McGaugh; Municipal League of Metro St. Louis; Missouri Municipal League.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this bill reduces transparency, but there are some benefits to the bill.

Testifying in person against the bill was Arnie Dienoff.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say this bill provides clarity on what must be included in the financial statements submitted by political subdivisions and who is required to file. The reason for the December deadline is related to political candidate filing requirements.

Testifying in person on the bill was Stacey Heislen, Missouri Ethics Commission.

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.