

HCS SS SB 50 -- PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

SPONSOR: Black

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 13 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative by a vote of 8 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for SB 50.

BUDGETS OF POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS (Section 67.010 and 67.020)

This bill requires certain materials related to proposed budgets of political subdivisions to be submitted to each member of the governing body of the political subdivision no later than seven days in advance of any vote on the budget.

PHYSICAL COPIES OF MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES (Section 71.948)

Currently, municipal clerks are required to keep at least three copies of the published book of the general ordinances of the municipality on file in the office of the municipal clerk and kept available for inspection by the public.

This bill allows municipal clerks to keep only one copy of the published book of the general ordinances on file if the ordinances are also available online for inspection without cost by the public.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN BOARDS (Section 79.235)

This bill authorizes the mayor of any city of the fourth classification with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants to, if authorized, appoint a member of a nonelected board or commission, and if members of the board or commission are required to be residents of the city, satisfy the residency requirement if the person appointed owns real property or a business in the city.

The bill authorizes the mayor of any city of the fourth classification with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants to, if authorized to appoint a member of a nonelected board that manages a municipal utility of the city, and if members of the board are required to be residents of the city, satisfy the residency requirement if the:

- (1) Board cannot set utility rates or issue bonds;
- (2) Appointee resides within five miles of the city limits;

- (3) Appointee owns real property or a business in the city;
- (4) Appointee is a customer of the utility managed by the board;  
and
- (5) Appointee has no pecuniary interest in any utility. The provisions of this bill do not apply to any city within St. Louis County.

REGIONAL JAIL DISTRICTS (Section 221.400, 221.402, 221.405, 221.407, & 221.410)

Currently, any two or more contiguous counties can establish a regional jail district.

This bill provides that if an existing regional jail district already levies a sales tax and another county joins the district, such joining with the district will not be effective until the voters of the county have approved the sales tax.

The bill also adds that a district can equip and maintain jail facilities, as well as lease its properties. The regional jail commission can acquire, construct, reconstruct, repair, alter, improve, and extend a regional jail and it can contract with governmental or private entities. Commissioners will also serve until their successors in their county offices have assumed office. Currently, any regional jail district can impose a one-eighth, one-fourth, three-eighths, or one-half of one percent sales tax. This bill changes the amount to up to one percent. The bill also provides that such sales tax can be used for jail services, facilities, and equipment, whereas, currently, the tax can be used for jail services and court facilities, and equipment in the regional jail district.

This bill also provides that expenditures paid for by the regional jail district sales tax trust fund can be made for any of the district's authorized purposes.

Currently, a jail build by a regional jail district must be generally central to the district. Under this bill, the jail only needs to be within the district.

These provisions repeal the sunset provision.

These provisions contain an emergency clause.

REIMBURSEMENTS TO JAILS (Section 221.105 & 550.320)

This bill provides that whenever a person is sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a correctional center, the Department of Corrections must reimburse the county or St. Louis City for the days the person spent in custody at a per diem cost, not to exceed \$37.50 a day.

The sheriff of the county or the chief executive officer of St. Louis City must certify to the Department the total number of days any offender spent in the county or city jail. The office of the sheriff or chief executive officer can then submit a claim to the Department, no later than two years from the date the claim became eligible for reimbursement. The Department will determine if the expenses are eligible for reimbursement and must remit any payment to the county or to St. Louis City.

This bill repeals provisions relating to the current process for counties and St. Louis City to request reimbursement for the number of days an offender spent in a county or city jail.

These provisions are similar to provisions in the perfected SS/SB 900 (2024) and SB 1353 (2024).

#### GOOD TIME AND EARNED TIME CREDIT (Section 558.041)

Currently, an offender in a Department of Corrections institution can earn good time credit.

This bill expands the credit-earning system to include both "good time credit" for displaying exemplary compliance with institutional disciplinary regulations and "earned time credit" for successfully participating in rehabilitative programming or productive activities. Major conduct violations or a total of six minor conduct violations within a calendar year will result in the loss of all prior good time and earned time credit. Good time credit will be earned at a rate of 54 days per year of the offender's sentence imposed by the courts and earned time credit will be earned at a rate of 10 days for 30 days of successful participation in rehabilitative programming or productive activities.

If the Department of Corrections determines the offender has not satisfactorily complied with institutional regulations, they will not receive good time credit.

Earned time credit will not be awarded for programs completed prior to an offender's sentence. The Department will specify the types of programs or activities for which earned time credit will be awarded, including but not limited to the following: receiving a high school diploma or equivalent, college diploma or professional certificate, or vocational training certificates, and participating in successful employment, parenting, and financial literacy courses, alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs, and restorative justice and faith-based programs.

From January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026, eligible offenders can petition for earned time credit for qualifying programs completed between January 1, 2010 and August 28, 2025. The incarcerated population will be notified of the petition process.

Offenders sentenced to death or life sentences without probation or parole will not be eligible for good time credits or earned time credits, but the Department will record their participation in the same manner as the eligible population.

The Department will submit an annual report to the General Assembly on good time credit and earned time credit, including the number of offenders receiving credit under both programs.

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

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this could have a significant impact on Daviess and Dekalb counties' regional jail district. They will be able to reduce jail expenditures and increase efficiency with the completion of a crucial new jail facility. Currently, their authority to levy a tax expires completely in 2028. Eliminating the sunset date they need for continual votes on the reauthorization of the district prevents a single vote from eliminating the district and provides stability. Increasing to a one percent maximum for the sales tax will give the counties the option to invest in jail facilities if they so choose. Contracting for prisoner housing allows flexibility with an intermediate step and there are provisions protecting against privatization of prisons. The bill also helps local governments and makes these types of regional jail districts available statewide.

Testifying in person for the bill were Senator Black; James Harris, CJ Hart & Company; and St. Louis County.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the Federal Communications Commission is in the process of adopting new inmate phone call rates right now but are in the courts. The Federal regulations would preempt the provisions of the bill. It would be better to wait and see what happens at the national level before adopting these provisions, and if caps are placed on the rates for phone calls, they should be graduated similar to the Federal regulations. Jails are more expensive due to high turnover rates, with some stays as short as 72 hours.

Testifying in person against the bill was Lee Petro, Outside Counsel for NCIC Corrections Phone Service.

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.