

HJR 124 -- SHERIFFS

SPONSOR: Cook

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime and Public Safety by a vote of 12 to 4 with 1 member voting present.

Upon voter approval, this constitutional amendment would require each county to elect a sheriff for a term of four years in perpetuity.

The amendment would also prohibit any method of removing a sheriff from office except by a writ of quo warranto initiated by the Attorney General.

The provisions of this amendment would not apply to St. Louis City, St. Louis County, or St. Charles County.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this is a constitutional amendment that would require the removal of elected county sheriffs, other than charter counties, to be initiated by the Attorney General. The sheriffs remain accountable to the voters and they are still subject to removal through the proper channels. Sheriffs should not be appointed, selected, or chosen by the political lobby. They should be elected by and should answer to the people. That is how a constitutional republic should work. In times of crisis there should be no question about who is in charge. This protects sheriffs from political retaliation.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Cook; Kristine Bunch; Arnie Dienoff; and Michael Bonham.

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.