
Local Government Committee

SB 5432

Brief Description: Allowing fire protection districts to have additional commissioners.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker, Roach, Hatfield, Zarelli, Kline, Brandland, Benton and Rasmussen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the governing board of a fire protection district to be increased from three to either five or seven commissioners if a majority of the voters in the district approve a ballot proposition authorizing the increase in board membership.
- Requires the creation of seven commissioner districts if the voters in a fire protection district with seven commissioners approve the creation of commissioner districts.

Hearing Date: 2/22/08

Staff: Thamas Osborn (786-7129).

Background:

Fire Protection Districts

A fire protection district is a type of special purpose district, typically located in an unincorporated area, with responsibility to provide fire prevention and suppression services, and emergency medical response. A fire protection district has the powers and authorities of a municipal corporation, including taxation, eminent domain, and the authority to enter contracts.

Increasing the Number of Fire Protection District Commissioners

Fire protection districts are managed by a board initially composed of three commissioners elected at large. The three commissioners must be registered voters residing in the district. If the three member board determines by resolution that it is in the best interest of the district to increase the number of commissioners from three to five, or if the board is presented with a petition signed by 10 percent of the registered voters residing within the district, the board shall submit a resolution to the legislative authority of the pertinent county or counties requesting that an election be held.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Upon receipt of the resolution, the county legislative authority must call a special election so as to allow the voters to consider a ballot proposition regarding the proposed increase in the number of fire protection commissioners.

Creation of Fire Protection Commissioner Districts

Absent a decision by the voters to elect commissioners by district, commissioners are elected on an at-large basis, with each representing the entire district. However, a board of fire commissioners may adopt a resolution by unanimous vote that will result in a ballot proposition being submitted to the voters authorizing the creation of commissioner districts. If a simple majority of voters approves the ballot proposition, three commissioner districts must be created for a fire protection district with three commissioners, and five commissioner districts must be created for a fire protection district with five commissioners.

Summary of Bill:

The governing board of a fire district may be increased from three to either five or seven commissioners if a majority of the voters in the district approve a ballot proposition authorizing the increase in board membership.

If the voters in a fire protection district with seven commissioners approve the creation of commissioner districts, then seven commissioner districts must be created.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.