

HCS HB 1373 -- COUNTY BUDGETS

SPONSOR: Gatschenberger (Asbury)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Local Government by a vote of 17 to 0.

This substitute authorizes a county to amend its budget twice during any fiscal year when there is a verifiable decline in funds of at least 2% that could not have been estimated or anticipated when the budget was adopted. Currently, a county is only authorized to amend its annual budget when it receives additional funds that could not be estimated.

Any decrease in appropriations cannot unduly affect any one officeholder and cannot impact any dedicated fund authorized by law. The county must provide 30 days' notice of a public hearing regarding any amendment to the county budget, including a published summary of the proposed reductions and an explanation of the shortfall.

Before any reduction affecting an elected officeholder can occur, negotiations must take place with all officeholders who receive funds from the affected category of funds in an attempt to cover the shortfall.

County commissioners can reduce budgets of departments under their direct supervision and responsibility at any time without these restrictions.

These provisions cannot restrict a charter county from amending its budget pursuant to the terms of its charter.

These provisions will expire July 1, 2015.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that a county should be given the authority to revise its budget downward the same as it has to revise the budget upward, especially in the current economic climate.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Asbury; Steve Hobbs, Audrain County Commission; and Missouri County Collectors Association.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that authorizing the notice of the meeting at which any budget change would be considered to be published on a county website, without the

publication in a newspaper, is not sufficient because many people do not have access to a computer.

Testifying against the bill was the Missouri Press Association.