

HCS HB 353 -- UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS

SPONSOR: Eggleston

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Elections and Elected Officials by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 14 to 0.

This bill expands the existing exception for small cities, towns, and villages under Section 115.124, RSMo, which allows candidates for election to assume office without holding an election if a particular election is uncontested and the number of candidates available equal the number of open positions, from cities, towns, or villages with 1,000 or less persons to those with 2,000 or less persons.

The bill also requires municipalities that schedule late elections via court order to pay for any administrative costs of the election authority. The election authority will provide good faith notice of such costs. If a municipality agrees to schedule and election and defaults on payment, then election authorities may recover triple damages, restitution, and attorney fees.

The bill is similar to HB 2111 (2016).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will save election costs in many instances. A study conducted by Representative Eggleston revealed that cost savings would be possible in approximately 40% of cases studied over a 10 year period.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Eggleston.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.