

HCS HB 81 -- MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS

SPONSOR: Hill

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Downsizing State Government by a vote of 5 to 3. Motion to "Do Pass" failed by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative Oversight by a vote of 3 to 3.

This bill requires, within five years of the effective date of the bill, that any city with a population of 5000 or less inhabitants, with an area of less than two square miles, with a municipal police department, and located in St. Louis County, to disband its police department and to contract for law enforcement services with either the county police department, or, under certain restrictions, another city.

A city meeting the requirements above can contract with another city if:

- 1) The two cities share a border and the combined population of the two cities is at least 15,000 inhabitants; or
- 2) The pertinent city shares a border with another city that contracts with the same (third) city and the combined population of all the cities is at least 15,000 inhabitants.

A city that originally contracts with another city may discontinue that contract and then contract with the county police department, but it cannot discontinue a contract with one city and then contract with another city.

This bill is the same as HB 2427 (2018).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill targets St. Louis County municipalities only because of their unique situation. The area is fragmented because they voted to separate from St. Louis City and utilities and infrastructure could not be done without incorporating. This will affect 17 cities with fragmented police services. The bill will allow cities to contract with larger cities or the county itself.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Hill.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this bill would not allow three cities to link and consolidate. We want police departments to be good and efficient making sure that response times to situations remains quick. When Maryland Heights incorporated, it took the county 45 minutes to arrive in an

emergency situation. Today their own police response times are within four minutes for emergency and seven minutes for nonemergency.

Testifying against the bill were the Missouri Police Chiefs' Association; Charles G. Caverly, Municipal League of Metro St. Louis; and James McGee, Vinita Park.

This bill is similar to HB 2427 (2018).