

SS SCS SB 34 -- CORONERS

SPONSOR: Riddle

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill establishes the "Coroner Standards and Training Commission" and specifies the members of which the commission will be composed. The commission will establish training standards relating to the Office of County Coroner. The standards will relate to the operation of the office, the legal responsibilities of the office, and the technical skills and knowledge required of the office. The commission may certify training programs that satisfy the classroom instruction requirements in lieu of the training provided by the Missouri Coroners' and Medical Examiners' Association. Certified training completion will be submitted to the association, and the association will submit the individual's name to the county treasurer and the Department of Health and Senior Services indicating the individual is compliant with the training requirements.

The bill also establishes the "Missouri State Coroners' Training Fund" and adds a \$1 fee for all death certificates issued in the state, which will be deposited into the fund. Any amount of money in the fund over \$500,000 shall revert to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

The bill provides that when a death occurs under the care of a hospice, no investigation shall be required if the death is certified by the treating physician of the deceased or the medical director of the hospice as a natural death due to disease or diagnosed illness. The hospice must give written notice to the coroner or medical examiner within 24 hours of the death.

The bill specifies that if a coroner is not current on his or her training, the department may prohibit that coroner from signing any death certificates. In the event a coroner is unable to sign a death certificate, the county sheriff will appoint a medical professional to attest death certificates until the coroner can resume signing them or until another coroner is appointed or elected.

This bill is similar to SCS HCS HB 447 (2019) and HCS HB 242 (2019).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will fund training

requirements for coroners and should improve proper methods used by coroners. It will also allow better monitoring and statistics collection on child fatalities. Currently, there are few requirements for serving as a coroner which could lead to erroneous information in reports or certification.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Riddle; Missouri Coroners and Medical Examiners Association; Missouri Hospice & Palliative Care Association; and the Missouri Hospital Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.