

SFA

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Fiscal Agency

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Senate Bill 706 (as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Harmon Cropsey
Committee: Local Government and Veterans

Date Completed: 3-22-90

RATIONALE

In earlier years, the purpose of a township annual meeting, which in some cases was the only meeting of the township government for the year, was to transact all of a township's business. With a few exceptions, such as setting salaries and authorizing the sale or purchase of property, much of the business of township government today is carried out during regularly scheduled meetings. Furthermore, many townships report a very low attendance at the annual meeting. Public Act 106 of 1984 amended Chapter 16 of the Revised Statutes of 1846, which prescribes the powers and duties of townships, to allow townships with fewer than 5,000 residents to submit to the voters the question of abolishing the annual meeting, and provided procedures for reestablishing an annual meeting. Public Act 77 of 1989 further amended the Revised Statutes to provide that if a majority of township electors voted to reestablish the annual meeting, the electors at the annual meeting would reassume powers conferred by statute. Public Act 77 also specifies that if the annual meeting were abolished, powers that could have been exercised by the electors could be exercised by the township board. Some people believe that clarification is needed as to the powers of a township board in absence of an annual meeting.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Chapter 16 of the

Revised Statutes of 1846 to provide that in a township that did not hold an annual meeting, the powers that could have been exercised by the electors at an annual meeting could be exercised by the township board. The bill would delete the current provision that permits a township board, if the annual meeting is abolished, to exercise powers that could have been exercised by the electors at the annual meeting.

Currently, the Revised Statutes provide that in a township, other than a charter township, the township board by resolution is permitted, or upon the filing of petitions signed by not less than 5% of the township's registered electors, is required, to submit to the township electors the question of reestablishment of the township annual meeting. The bill would require that petitions be signed by a number of registered electors of the township that was equal to at least 5% of the electors who voted for township supervisor at the immediately preceding township supervisor election. In addition, the bill would increase from 63 to 70 the number of days prior to the election that the resolution or petitions must be submitted.

MCL 41.8

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

S.B. 706 (3-22-90)

ARGUMENTS

Supporting Argument

The bill would provide clarification on the exercise of power in a township that does not hold an annual meeting by specifying that the powers of the electors exercised at an annual meeting could be exercised by the township board. Furthermore, the bill would lower the required number of signatures needed on a petition for reestablishment of an annual meeting. Currently, at least 5% of a township's registered electors must sign the petition. The bill provides, rather, that the number of signatures on the petition would have to be at least 5% of the electors who voted for township supervisor at the previous township supervisor election. This amount could be less than the total amount of registered electors in a township.

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