

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA



BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 181 (as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Philip E. Hoffman
Committee: Government Operations

Date Completed: 6-4-01

RATIONALE

Public Act 209 of 1911 prescribes the design of the State flag and the State coat-of-arms. The Act requires the flag to be blue charged with the coat-of-arms. The Act specifies, in detail, the design of the coat-of-arms, which must feature an elk and a moose facing each other in rampant pose (on their hind legs, in profile). The elk and moose surround a man on a peninsula in a rustic scene, over which there is an American eagle with its right talon holding an olive branch and its left holding three arrows. In places on the coat-of-arms there are the following Latin words and phrases: "E Pluribus Unum" (Out of many, one); "Tuebor" (I will defend); "Si quaeris peninsulam, amoenam" (If you seek a pleasant peninsula); and "circumspice" (look about you).

It has been pointed out that, despite these details, unless someone were familiar with the design of the coat-of-arms, he or she might have difficulty identifying the State's flag because nowhere does the word "Michigan" appear. It has been suggested that the State's name, and the year the territory became a state, be included on the State flag.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Public Act 209 of 1911 to provide that on the State flag the word "Michigan" would have to be placed above the coat-of-arms, and "1837" would have to be placed below the coat-of-arms.

MCL 2.23

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate

Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

Reportedly, there are 18 states whose flags feature a blue background with various designs. While Michigan's flag includes a detailed coat-of-arms, unless one had studied the design, the flag would be indistinguishable from other state flags. By requiring the word "Michigan" and the year of statehood to appear on the flag, the bill would make it more recognizable and informative.

The bill would not require the replacement of all existing State flags at their present locations, but flags made in the future would have to conform to the bill.

Legislative Analyst: G. Towne

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of hiring a designer to recreate the State flag with the new guidelines would be the primary cost of this bill and would depend on the services provided. State flags are currently purchased regularly for display in and around State buildings and offices and this cost would remain unchanged.

Fiscal Analyst: J. Runnels

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.