

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1251
By: Hope
County Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Montgomery County Hospital District was created in 1966 by the legislature, and currently the county has no sufficient means in which they can dissolve of the district. In order to call for a general election on the question of dissolving the district, someone must circulate a petition and gather the signatures of 15% of all registered voters in Montgomery County. In addition to being an extremely high number to attain, 15% of registered voters is a “moving target”. In 2001 some Montgomery County residents circulated a petition to call for an election, and after a mass voter registration drive by hospital district supporters, those circulating the petition fell a few signatures short of the over 28,000 signature needed.

Attempts to increase the number of voters in the county are what makes the current number of signatures required a “moving target”. What this bill will do is give those who would like to have an election on the dissolution of the district a direct number to work for. County election officials will be able to say exactly how many voters participated in the most recent gubernatorial election, and petitioners will be able to identify an exact target number of 15% of votes cast.

This bill is not about dissolving the district, nor is this bill about depriving citizens of the county needed medical treatment. This bill will simply make it easier to put the question in front of the entire county for a vote, and in the event that the district is dissolved all assets will be transferred to the county. These assets and capitol shall be used only to provide for the poor and indigent of Montgomery County.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee’s opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

Section1: The enabling act for the Montgomery county is amended to state that in order to call for an election on the dissolution of the hospital district, one must gain a petition with and number of valid signatures equal 15% of the total number of votes cast in the most recent gubernatorial election.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1 2003

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The committee substitute states that an election cannot occur more than once every three years, and a valid petition that calls for an election cannot be submitted more than once every three years.