

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2149
By: Bohac
Elections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

As home rule cities increase in population as a result of growth and annexation, the voting public tends to have less contact with their elected municipal representatives. This often results in lower voter turnout and a reduced level of participation in the civic affairs of the municipality.

This sense of alienation is felt most acutely by voters in newly annexed areas who were represented by special district directors prior to the annexation. These residents are transitioning from a very close and personal level of representation at the district level to a municipal structure that does not provide the same level of responsiveness and accessibility. Although still difficult, this transition for residents in fast growing communities and newly annexed areas can be eased by ensuring that they have a voice and seat at the municipal level of government from a geographic and community of interest perspective.

C.S.H.B. 2149 requires large municipalities to elect the members of its governing body wholly or partially from single member districts to ensure that new residents and voters of the municipality will have the incentive and ability to participate fully in the civic affairs of the community, and to protect the franchise of these newest municipal residents.

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

C.S.H.B. 2149 amends the Election Code by adding language stating that an area that is located in a special district as defined by Section 43.052(a), Local Government Code, and that is included in a municipality's annexation plan may not be annexed by a municipality with a population of more than 650,000 unless at the time the area is to be annexed, the municipality elects the members of its governing body wholly or partly from single-member districts.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The differences between the original and substitute bill lie in SECTION 1 of the measures. C.S.H.B. 2149 deletes Subdivisions (2) and (3) from the original language. The substitute includes Subdivision (1) of the original language as part of Section 275.004