

Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Minutes of Meeting
2015 Regular Session
April 29, 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Tim Burns, chairman of the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. in Room 2, in the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The secretary called the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Tim Burns, Chairman
Representative Jeff Arnold
Representative Taylor F. Barras
Representative John A. Berthelot
Representative Joseph Bouie Jr.
Representative Mike Danahay, Vice Chair
Representative Randal L. Gaines
Representative Mike Johnson
Representative Gregory A. Miller
Representative Stephen E. Pugh
Representative John M. Schroder, Sr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, Legislative Analyst
Mark Mahaffey, Attorney
Shawn O'Brien, Secretary

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Linda Robillard, Sergeant at Arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

House Bill No. 451 by Representative Schexnayder

Representative Schexnayder presented House Bill No. 451, which provides for the abolition of certain boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and like entities.

Representative Burns offered a technical amendment to the bill and offered a motion to adopt the proposed technical amendment. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Johnson, Pugh, and Burns voted yea.

Representative Berthelot offered a motion to report House Bill No. 451 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 451 was reported with amendments by a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Johnson, Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Pugh, and Burns voted yea.

House Bill No. 76 by Representative Alfred Williams

Representative Alfred Williams presented House Bill No. 76, which provides for the election sections for the City Court of Baton Rouge and further provides that three judges are elected from election section one and two judges are elected from election section two.

Mr. Ronald Johnson, 5550 N. Foster Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, 225-356-3408, testified in support of the legislation.

Ms. Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, staff analyst, explained an apparent conflict between census data and the geography of the proposed district.

Honorable Judge Yvette M. Alexander, 1425 Chippenham Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, 225-389-5007, spoke in support of the bill.

Honorable Councilwoman C. Denise Marcelle, Baton Rouge Metro Council (no address provided), 225-389-3182, spoke in support of the bill.

At the chairman's request, Representative Ponti compared his House Bill No. 122, which also provides relative to the election of judges for the City Court of Baton Rouge, to House Bill No. 76.

Ms. Julie Cherry, Louisiana AFL-CIO, 429 Government Street., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, 225-383-5741, submitted a witness card in support of the bill.

Representative Bouie offered a motion to report House Bill No. 76 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 76 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Tim Burns, Danahay, Gaines, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, and Schroder voted yea.

House Bill No. 122 by Representative Ponti

Representative Ponti presented House Bill No. 122, which provides relative to the election of judges for the City Court of Baton Rouge.

Mr. Alex Wall, former Baton Rouge city judge, 1761 Rodney Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70808, testified in support of the bill.

Mr. Ronald Johnson, 5550 N. Foster Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, 225-356-3408, testified in opposition to the legislation.

Representative Pugh offered a motion to report House Bill No. 122 favorably, to which Representative Gaines objected. A roll call vote was taken and House Bill No. 122 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas and 2 nays. Representatives Barras, Berthelot, Danahay, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea. Representatives Bouie and Gaines voted nay.

House Bill No. 348 by Representative Hunter

Representative Hunter presented House Bill No. 348, which provides relative to early voting.

Representative Hunter proposed an amendment to the bill.

Mr. Joe Salter, secretary's of state's office, 8585 Archives Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70809, 225-922-2880, provided information on the bill.

Ms. Angie Rogers, commission of elections, 8585 Archives Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70809, 225-922-2880, provided information on the bill.

Ms. Sandra McDade, Louisiana Power Coalition, 3112 Pines, Shreveport, LA, 318-458-1410, testified in opposition to the bill.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: four in support, one in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Representative Burns asked the author to work further with elections officials on election scheduling details of the bill.

Representative Burns offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 348. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 348 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Danahay, Gaines, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

House Bill No. 286 by Representative Pearson

Representative Schroder presented House Bill No. 286 on behalf of the author. The bill requires an internal auditing function in state departments.

Representative Burns offered amendments to require the chief audit executive to maintain organizational independence in accordance with standards and to have unrestricted access to the specified agenda; require that the secretary rather than the undersecretary of the department establish an internal audit function, and remove the proposed deletion of a duty of the secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality relative to internal audits; and to require the Legislative Audit Advisory Council to hold a hearing if the legislative auditor makes certain findings.

Representative Burns offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Bouie, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

Mr. Patrick Goldsmith, director, House Fiscal Division, provided information on the bill.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: two for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Representative Schroder offered a motion to report House Bill No. 286 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 286 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Johnson, Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Gaines, Miller, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

House Bill No. 640 by Representative Mike Johnson

Representative Mike Johnson presented House Bill No. 640, which provides relative to election offenses.

Hon. Heather Cloud, Mayor, Village of Turkey Creek, P. O. Box 259, Turkey Creek, LA 70585, spoke in support of the bill.

Representative Berthelot offered a motion to report House Bill No. 640 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 640 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Gaines, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 44 by Representative Foil

Representative Foil presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 44, which requests all state agencies in the executive branch of state government to provide for a crisis leave pool and requests the Department of State Civil Service to report progress to the legislature.

Representative Burns offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 44 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 44 was reported favorably by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

House Bill No. 601 by Representative Hollis

Representative Hollis presented House Bill No. 601, which provides age, residence, and domicile requirements for members of the Public Service Commission.

Representative Burns offered amendments to specify that the period of time during which the candidate must have been actually domiciled in the district is the year preceding qualification.

Representative Burns offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: six in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Representative Berthelot offered a motion to report House Bill No. 601 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 601 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 39 by Representative Hollis

Representative Hollis presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 39, which requests the House and Governmental Affairs and Senate and Governmental Affairs committees to meet and function as a joint committee to study the advisability of reducing the number of signatures required to have a recall election.

Representative Miller offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 39 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 39 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Gaines, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

House Bill No. 296 by Representative Tim Burns

Representative Tim Burns presented House Bill No. 296, which provides relative to records related to enforcement of provisions under the jurisdiction of the Board of Ethics.

Ms. Kristy Gary, Board of Ethics, LaSalle Building, 10th Floor, Baton Rouge, LA, 225-219-5600, spoke on the bill for information.

Representative Burns offered an amendment to provide that proposed provisions relative to expungement do not apply to enforcement proceedings that are concluded by consent opinion.

Representative Burns made a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Gaines, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

Mr. Scott Sternberg, Louisiana Press Association, 379 Orchard Rd., River Ridge, LA 70123, 504-569-2900, testified in opposition to the bill.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: two in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Representative Johnson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 296 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 296 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Arnold, Barras, Berthelot, Bouie, Gaines, Johnson, Miller, Pugh, Schroder, and Burns voted yea.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to come before the committee.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Burns, Chairman
Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

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