

SESSION OF 2009

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 171

As Amended by House Committee on Elections

Brief*

SB 171 would allow the Board of County Commissioners of Sherman County (Board) to provide for the at-large election of its members if the voters of Sherman County approve the proposal.

The Board would be required to adopt a resolution that provided for the following:

- Each county commissioner would run at large, and each candidate would be permitted to reside anywhere in Sherman County.
- All qualified electors residing in Sherman County would be permitted to vote in both the primary and general election for each county commissioner being elected.
- Primary elections would be conducted on a partisan basis. Primary election voters would be permitted to vote for the same number of candidates as the number of commissioners being elected. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes would appear on the general election ballot, for each county commissioner being elected. No person would be permitted to cast more than one vote for any specific candidate.
- General election voters would be allowed to vote for the same number of candidates as the number of county commissioners being elected. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each commissioner office being elected would be deemed to have been elected.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

The new statute creating the at-large election authority for the Sherman County Board of County Commissioners would expire on December 31, 2010, unless the Sherman County voters elect to adopt the at-large election method prior to that date. A dual majority would be required; *i.e.*, a majority of the voters residing in the City of Goodland would have to approve the adoption of the at-large election method, and a majority of the voters residing outside Goodland would have to approve adoption of the at-large method.

The bill also would make conforming changes to other sections of law.

Background

The issue has been before the Legislature in the past two legislative sessions. Senator Ralph Ostmeyer testified in favor of the bill. Also providing supporting testimony were a representative of the Board, a former County Commissioner, the Commissioners of the City of Goodland, the Sherman County Election Officer, a citizen group and several residents of Sherman County. One resident provided testimony in opposition to the bill.

The House Committee on Elections amended the bill to require a dual majority vote on the at-large election method.

According to the fiscal note, passage of the bill would have no fiscal effect. However, an election would be required in Sherman County if the Board adopts the resolution referred to in the bill. Any such election cost would be borne by the county.