Session of 2025

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 1605

By Committee on Federal and State Affairs

1-22

A PROPOSITION to amend article 9 of the constitution of the state of Kansas by adding a new section thereto; concerning the power of home rule for counties.

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the State of Kansas, two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the Senate and two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the House of Representatives concurring therein:

Section 1. The following proposition to amend the constitution of the state of Kansas shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the state for their approval or rejection: Article 9 of the constitution of the state of Kansas is hereby amended by adding a new section to read as follows:

"**§ 6. Counties' power of home rule.** (a) Counties are hereby empowered to determine their local affairs and government including the levying of taxes, excises, fees, charges and other exactions, except when and as the levying of any tax, excise, fee, charge or other exaction is limited or prohibited by enactment of the legislature applicable uniformly to all counties of the same class. The legislature may establish not to exceed four classes of counties for the purpose of imposing all such limitations or prohibitions. Counties shall exercise such determination by resolution passed by the governing body with referendums only in such cases as prescribed by the legislature, subject only to enactments of the legislature of statewide concern applicable uniformly to all counties, to other enactments of the legislature applicable uniformly to all counties, to enactments of the legislature applicable uniformly to all counties of the same class limiting or prohibiting the levying of any tax, excise, fee, charge or other exaction and to enactments of the legislature prescribing limits of indebtedness. All enactments relating to counties now in effect or hereafter enacted and as later amended and until repealed shall govern counties, except as counties shall exempt themselves by charter resolutions as herein provided for in subsection (b).

(b) (1) Any county may by charter resolution elect in the

manner prescribed in this section that the whole or any part of any enactment of the legislature applying to such county, other than enactments of statewide concern applicable uniformly to all counties, other enactments applicable uniformly to all counties, and enactments prescribing limits of indebtedness, shall not apply to such county.

(2) A charter resolution is a resolution which exempts a county from the whole or any part of any enactment of the legislature as referred to in this section and which may provide substitute and additional provisions on the same subject. Such charter resolution shall be so titled, shall designate specifically the enactment of the legislature or part thereof made inapplicable to such county by the adoption of such resolution and contain the substitute and additional provisions, if any, and shall require a two-thirds vote of the members-elect of the governing body of such county. Every charter resolution shall be published once each week for two consecutive weeks in the official county newspaper or, if there is none, in a newspaper of general circulation in the county.

(3) No charter resolution shall take effect until 60 days after its final publication. If, within 60 days of its final publication, a petition signed by a number of electors of the county equal to not less than 10% of the number of electors who voted at the last preceding regular county election shall be filed in the office of the clerk of such county demanding that such resolution be submitted to a vote of the electors, it shall not take effect until submitted to a referendum and approved by a majority of the electors voting thereon. An election, if called, shall be called within 30 days and held within 90 days after the filing of the petition. The governing body shall pass a resolution calling the election and fixing the date, which resolution shall be published once each week for three consecutive weeks in the official county newspaper or, if there is none, in a newspaper of general circulation in the county, and the election shall be conducted as elections for officers and by the officers handling such elections. The proposition shall be: "Shall charter resolution No. _____, entitled (title of resolution) take effect?" The governing body may submit any charter resolution to a referendum without petition by the same publication of the charter resolution, and the same publication of the resolution calling the election as for resolutions upon petition and such charter resolution shall then become effective when approved by a majority of the electors voting thereon. Each charter

resolution becoming effective shall be recorded by the county clerk in a book maintained for that purpose with a statement of the manner of adoption, and a certified copy shall be filed with the secretary of state, who shall keep an index of the same.

(4) Each charter resolution enacted shall control and prevail over any prior or subsequent act of the governing body of the county, and may be repealed or amended only by charter resolution or by enactments of the legislature applicable to all counties.

(c) Powers and authority granted to counties pursuant to this section shall be liberally construed for the purpose of giving to counties the largest measure of self-government.

(d) This amendment shall be effective on and after July 1, 2027."

Sec. 2. The following statement shall be printed on the ballot with the amendment as a whole:

"*Explanatory statement.* This amendment would provide a constitutional basis for county home rule, which is currently enshrined only in statutory law. Counties could pass home rule resolutions to legislate locally on matters not covered by state law. A county could enact a charter resolution to exempt itself from non-uniform state laws that apply to the county and provide substitute or additional provisions to that law. The legislature could preempt counties from exercising home rule powers by enacting state laws that apply uniformly to all counties, or to all counties of the same class, as defined by statute.

"A vote for this proposition would empower counties to determine their local affairs and government with a constitutional grant of power that could only be preempted by enactments of the legislature that apply uniformly to all counties, or to all counties of the same class, as defined by statute.

"A vote against this proposition would retain the current statutory authority of counties to determine their local affairs and government, but such authority could continue to be removed or restricted by enactments of the legislature, regardless of uniformity."

Sec. 3. This resolution, if approved by two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the Senate and two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the House of Representatives, shall be entered on the journals, together with the yeas and nays. The secretary of state shall cause this resolution to be published

as provided by law and shall cause the proposed amendment to be submitted to the electors of the state at the general election in November in the year 2026, unless a special election is called at a sooner date by concurrent resolution of the legislature, in which case the proposed amendment shall be submitted to the electors of the state at the special election.