

House Local Government Committee

Hearing on HB 2062

January 29, 2013

Testimony of Jim Flory

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, my name is Jim Flory, and I appear today to testify briefly in support of HB 2062. I am both a resident of Marion Township and the elected Douglas County Commissioner serving both Marion Township and Clinton Township where the issue of fire protection is of concern.

Marion Township does not have a township fire department, but rather, is part of Fire District #4 in Osage County. Like many of my Marion Township neighbors, my residence is located within 4 miles of a Clinton Township Fire Department sub-station, but my primary fire protection is provided by a station that is located approximately 15 miles from my property.

The purpose of this proposed amendment is simple and straight-forward. It merely enables local residents to exercise governance over the critical issue of how best to protect their homes and property. The proposed amendment does not mandate any particular action, but it does allow the residents of a designated area, if they so desire, to seek detachment from an existing fire district in order to obtain fire protection that is more appropriately located and can better protect their property.

In making my final review of the proposed legislation, I have one suggested change to the Bill that I believe would be appropriate. Our initial thoughts were that a petition signed by 25% of the qualified electors would be appropriate to initiate an election. Since, as stated in the first paragraph of the Bill, the petition could actually effectuate a detachment if approved by governing body of the existing fire district, I believe that the required number of signatures on the petition should be 51% of the qualified electors. That more stringent requirement would assure that no detachment could occur without the approval of a majority of the qualified electors of the impacted area.

I would appreciate your favorable consideration of the proposed amendment and would be glad to entertain any questions from the Committee.

Ph. 785. 832. 5268