

House Local Government Committee

Hearing on HB 2062

January 29, 2013

Testimony of Gaylord Anderson

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, my name is Gaylord Anderson, and I appear today to testify in opposition of HB 2062. I am a resident of Osage County and the elected Osage County Commissioner serving the areas of Osage County protected by Fire District #4.

The proposed amendment contained in HB 2062 would allow a small portion (just 25%) of the residents of a designated area, to seek detachment from an existing fire district, rather than the majority (51%) of the residents that are required under current law. Our system of democracy is based upon the concept of majority rule. To allow just 25% of the residents of a district to determine the fate of the entire district is not the type of democracy our founding fathers envisioned. Allowing major changes to local government units that possess taxing authority at the request of just 25% of the residents is a dangerous proposition that is not consistent with the concept of majority rule.

While this proposed amendment might favor some counties and some residents, it will certainly have the potential to hurt others. If Douglas County residents were able to leave Fire District #4 in Osage County, it might provide those Douglas County residents lower insurance rates and quicker response times. However, the residents living in the Osage County portion of Fire District #4 will see their tax burden increase to make up for the tax base lost from Douglas County. If higher taxes are not assessed by Fire District #4, to make up for the lost taxes from Douglas County residents, services will suffer and Osage County residents could be endangered by inadequate fire protection services.

I would appreciate careful consideration and caution before passing the proposed amendment and would be glad to entertain any questions from the Committee.

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