



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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TOWNSHIP MINUTES: PUBLICATION

**House Bill 4971 as introduced
First Analysis (10-26-95)**

**Sponsor: Rep. John Llewellyn
Committee: Local Government**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Under Chapter 16 of the Revised Statutes of 1846, which deals with the powers and duties of townships, a township board in a township with a state equalized valuation (SEV) of \$25 million or more must publish the proceedings of any meeting in a newspaper of general circulation in the township not more than 21 days after the meeting. (The act says a synopsis of the proceedings prepared by the clerk and approved by the supervisor, showing the substance of each separate proceeding of the board, is sufficient.) This SEV requirement has not changed since 1951, and property has increased in value enormously since that time. This means some very small townships are forced to face the burden and cost of meeting the publishing requirement. The intent of the SEV limit originally was to exempt these smaller townships from the requirement. To recapture this intent, legislation has been introduced to raise the SEV limit in the act.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4971 would require a township with an SEV of \$50 million or more to publish the proceedings of any meeting in a newspaper of general circulation in the township not more than 21 days after the meeting. (The SEV limit is currently \$25 million.)

MCL 41.72a

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The House Fiscal Agency notes that there would be no impact on state costs or revenues. There would be an indeterminate cost reduction for townships that no longer would have to publish accounts of their meetings and chose not to do so. (Fiscal Note dated 10-23-95)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill simply restores the original intent of the exemption for small townships from the requirement that they publish an account of their meetings in a locally circulated newspaper. The exemption is based on the total value of property in the township, and the threshold amount has not been changed since 1951.

Against:

Isn't the publication of official accounts of township board meetings a beneficial public service no matter how small the community?

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Townships Association supports the bill. (10-25-95)

House Bill 4971 (10-26-95)