

CHARTER TOWNSHIP CANDIDATES

House Bill 4447 as introduced First Analysis (9-24-97)

Sponsor: Rep. Michael Hanley
Committee: Local Government

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The Charter Township Act says that the primary election at which political parties nominate their candidates for township offices "shall be conducted, as near as may be, pursuant to the Michigan election law," but it goes on to provide its own separate petition requirements that candidates must meet to get their names printed on the primary election ballot. While these are similar to the petition requirements for general law townships found in the Michigan Election Law, they are not identical, and the differences have led to confusion and conflict for local election officials and candidates. In one recent case, reportedly, candidates for charter township office did not have the right number of signatures because the county clerk had sent notices saying the signature requirements found in the state election law had to be followed. Making signature requirements standard for all townships would eliminate such problems.

(The Charter Township Act requires that the signatures number not less than one percent or more than four percent of the total number of votes cast for the office of supervisor in the most recent election at which a supervisor was elected, while the election law requires signatures in an amount equal to not less than one percent or more than four percent of the total number of votes cast by the party in the township for secretary of state in the most recent election at which a secretary of state was elected.)

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Charter Township Act to eliminate the petition requirements for candidates seeking to get on the primary election ballot. This means the petition requirements for township candidates found in the Michigan Election Law would govern.

MCL 42.4

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The bill would have no fiscal impact, according to the House Fiscal Agency. (Fiscal Note dated 4-21-97)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would eliminate the separate petition requirements for getting on the primary ballot in charter townships and make those townships rely instead on requirements in the Michigan Election Law that apply to other townships. This will eliminate a source of confusion for election officials and candidates.

POSITIONS:

The Department of State has indicated support for the bill. (9-23-97)

The Michigan Township Association supports the bill. (9-23-97)

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Analyst: C. Couch

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.