

Legislative Analysis



REVISE OPEN MEETINGS ACT TO CLOSE COUNTY COMMISSION PARTISAN CAUCUSES

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House Bill 5907 (reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Rep. Hugh Crawford

Committee: Local Government

Complete to 12-10-14

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5907 AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE

House Bill 5907 would amend the Open Meetings Act (MCL 15.268) to allow county commissioners to close their partisan caucus meetings to the public.

Now under the law, the Open Meetings Act specifies 10 reasons a public body may meet in a closed session, without members of the public in attendance. Generally, closed sessions are allowed to protect employees' or students' privacy; keep collective bargaining hearings private; consider the purchase or lease of property; consult with attorneys regarding trial or settlement strategies; review the applications of potential employees or appointees; convene partisan caucuses in the state legislature; consider materials exempt from disclosure by state or federal statute; conduct compliance conferences under the Public Health Code; and, to search for and select university presidents. House Bill 5907 would retain all of these provisions.

In addition, as noted earlier, the bill would specify that members of county boards of commissioners' partisan caucuses could meet in closed sessions.

The bill also updates a reference to the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (rather than the Department of Commerce) now responsible for compliance conferences under section 333.16231 of the Public Health Code (at which investigations of health care providers' alleged violations of law are discussed).

FISCAL IMPACT:

As written, the bill would have an insignificant fiscal impact; it could provide a small reduction in county expenditures if partisan caucuses now comply with the Open Meetings Act, such as filing notices and providing for a public forum.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Association of Counties supports the bill. (12-4-14)

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